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The Shape of Things

THE AMERICAN DECISION ON PALESTINE, announced by Senator Austin in the Security Council last Tuesday, is a patent stalling maneuver. What does "acceptance" of the recommendations of the Assembly amount to if the Council proceeds to establish a committee to "look into possible threats to international peace" and to "consult" with the interested groups "concerning the implementation of the decision"? The United Nations Commission has already reported on the state of security in Palestine, and requested force to permit it to go ahead with the task of implementation to which it was assigned. To meet this demand with a proposal of a new inquiry, and new consultations with the commission, the mandatory power, and "representatives of the principal communities of Palestine"—which would certainly include the Arab leaders who have declared war on the authority of the United Nations—is to undermine the partition plan almost as effectively as the British have done in Palestine. And what does "acceptance" of the Assembly recommendation mean if the Council, as Mr. Austin asserts, is not empowered by the Charter "to enforce a political settlement whether it is pursuant to a recommendation of the General Assembly or of the Council itself"? How does this jibe with its obligation to proceed with the task of implementation? The statement is a tissue of inconsistencies, leading to only one possible conclusion: the United States, by refusing at the critical moment to advocate prompt enforcement of the Palestine decision, is opening the way to delay, compromise, and the possible defeat of partition.

✶

THE CRISIS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA BEGAN long before the Communist Minister of the Interior took action to purge the police of non-Communist officers. It had its roots in the sharpening conflict between Russia and the West, in Russia's determination to face the Western bloc with an unbroken front of states tied tight to Soviet economy and Soviet foreign policy. It had its roots in America's refusal to extend credit and other forms of help to a government that was fighting against great odds to preserve civil rights and constitutional methods. The irony of the present struggle is made evident in Mr. Gedye's story from Prague on page 230. In no other country has a democratic government tried so honestly to cooperate with Russia while maintaining its essential independence; in no other country have the Socialists tried so honestly to cooperate with the Communists. That both efforts have ended in the present threat of a Communist coup will be noted with profound alarm in those Western nations where hope of conciliation still lingers. It has been possible to justify some of the ruthless measures employed by Communists in other Eastern countries where democratic forces are weak and often compromised, and where extreme reaction is the obvious alternative to Communist control. In Czechoslovakia, neither of these conditions exists. It is hard to believe that even the Catholic-fascist elements in Slovakia could not have been held in check by legal measures or that any actual conspiracies could not be dealt with. It is impossible to believe that the coalition Czech government, headed by a Communist Prime Minister under the presidency of Dr. Benes, endangers Russia's security or its legitimate economic interests. The outcome of the present crisis is still in balance as we go to press. Some hope remains that an acceptable compromise will be reached through the patient efforts of the President. But if his efforts fail and a Communist coup is effected, we are convinced that Russia will lose more than it gains. For the "stubborn democracy" of the Czech people, which Mr. Gedye stresses, will convert them from willing allies to rebellious subjects.

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NEARLY 41,000 OF THE 56,000 MEMBERS OF the British Medical Association have voted their opposition to the National Health Service Act; only 4,735 cast their ballots for it. A lesser but still large number, 25,340, declared against signing contracts with the new service, which would provide medical care for all on a fixed-fee basis. The plebiscite, wrote the *New Statesman and Nation* on January 24, is really a "strike ballot" in "a straight trades dispute over terms and conditions of service." The British Medical Association, the doctors' trade union, objects to the terms offered by Aneurin Bevan, Minister of Health, for employment by the National Health Service. One issue in the dispute is the proposed basic salary, which, together with a fee for each registered patient, will make up a doctor's compensation. While this arrangement would be a great boon to a young man starting to practice, the association insists on

I. F. STONE is on vacation. His bi-weekly Washington articles, will be resumed upon his return.

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payment entirely on a free basis. In negotiations extending over the past three years, Mr. Bevan has made innumerable concessions, but the British Medical Association has stood pat on its total demands. Unless Parliament reverses itself, therefore, a showdown seems inevitable on July 5 when the act comes into force. The doctors say they will not "strike"; they will continue to treat patients, but they will expect these patients—who under the law will be making regular payments to the National Health Service—to honor their bills. Whether such bills will be legally collectible is doubtful, but obviously the position of the patient will be an invidious one. It seems a great pity that British medical men, who now have a wonderful opportunity to devote themselves to their real job in financial security, should sabotage a major social reform.

*

SOMEHOW, WE INCH ALONG. JUSTICE survives, in a breathless and difficult manner to be sure, but still it's there if you hunt long enough for it. We have in mind the case of John Longo, veteran antagonist of Frank Hague's corrupt Jersey City Democratic machine, and his acquittal of the fantastic charges which have hung over him for more than four years. After ten days of Alice in Wonderland proceedings in the Court of Common Pleas in Jersey City, in the course of which the prosecutor confessed to the disappearance of his star witness, the loss of the original election books which Longo was charged with having altered, and the absence of any save the most tenuous circumstantial evidence, Judge Drewen refused to give the case to the jury and ordered Longo's acquittal. So ends the case which has cost the state well over $100,000 through bull-headed pressing of charges which, if proved, would be tantamount anywhere else to spitting on the pavement. Since Frank Hague still rules Jersey City—although in absentia and Florida—and has pursued Longo with relentless fury since 1936, the foul play had to go on, in the hope that the verdict of guilty brought in by a Hague-ridden jury in the first trial might stick. In that event, Longo would once more have found himself behind the bars of one of Hague's Dachaus for the high crime of having changed his registration on the books, after an election, from Republican to Democratic.

*

WRITING ABOUT THE CASE OF ADA LOIS Sipuel, a month ago, we said that if the justices of the Supreme Court had "a decent regard for human dignity," they would hear her plea for a writ of mandamus compelling Oklahoma to admit her to its regular university law classes, grant the writ, "and dispel, once and for all, the myth of 'equal but separate.'" Last week, the court announced that it would not hear her plea and that "the District Court of Cleveland County, Oklahoma, did not depart from our mandate" when it, in turn, handed

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down an order which was flexible enough to allow the state to invent a special three-man law school for Miss Sipuel. The court went on to say that the question of discrimination by separation "was not an issue" in the original Sipuel hearing and that therefore "the manner in which the State of Oklahoma satisfies the order is a matter for the local courts at this time." In short, by refusing the writ—and, even more shockingly, by refusing even to hear Miss Sipuel's plea—the justices, with one exception, have failed to show a decent regard for human dignity. The exception was Justice Wiley Rutledge, who in a moving and angry dissenting opinion charged his colleagues with holding for an equality in "legal fiction" rather than "equality in fact." There can be no equality when there is separation, and that is the simple truth. It is time the Supreme Court gave it legal as well as moral affirmation.

*

IF DEMOCRATIC LEADERS ARE ALARMED OVER the threat of defection to the Wallace third party—as they now have every reason to be—they will give prayerful thought to the proceedings of last week's convention of Americans for Democratic Action in Philadelphia. Here were more than five hundred representatives of the independent bloc that can save the day for the Democrats, if anybody can, and is ready to do so—on condition. Top leaders in labor, like William Green and Walter Reuther; respected New Dealers, like Leon Henderson, Paul Porter, Wilson Wyatt, and Eleanor Roosevelt; vigorous local executives, like George Edwards, chairman of the Detroit City Council, and Hubert Humphrey, mayor of Minneapolis—these people can keep large sectors of the old Roosevelt vote from swinging to Wallace if only Mr. Truman and his advisers give them the concrete kind of encouragement they need. In spite of its cautious decision to take no stand on the Presidential campaign until after the convention, there is no doubt that A. D. A. *wants* to see a Democratic Administration returned in November, largely because it knows that a Republican President, carrying in a Republican Congress, might make short and fatal work of the Marshall Plan, to say nothing of what he might do to the domestic economy. It "unreservedly" condemned the Wallace movement for contributing to this very end. But the A. D. A. leaders cannot work miracles with their followers, who plainly need action now if they are to be sold on the Truman candidacy. Coming on top of the Wallace victory in New York's Twenty-fourth Congressional District, the coolness of the Philadelphia convention toward the President should awaken Democratic strategists to a simple and basic fact of American political life: that their party can stay in power only when it invokes the Jefferson-Jackson heritage for something more profound than fund-raising banquets.

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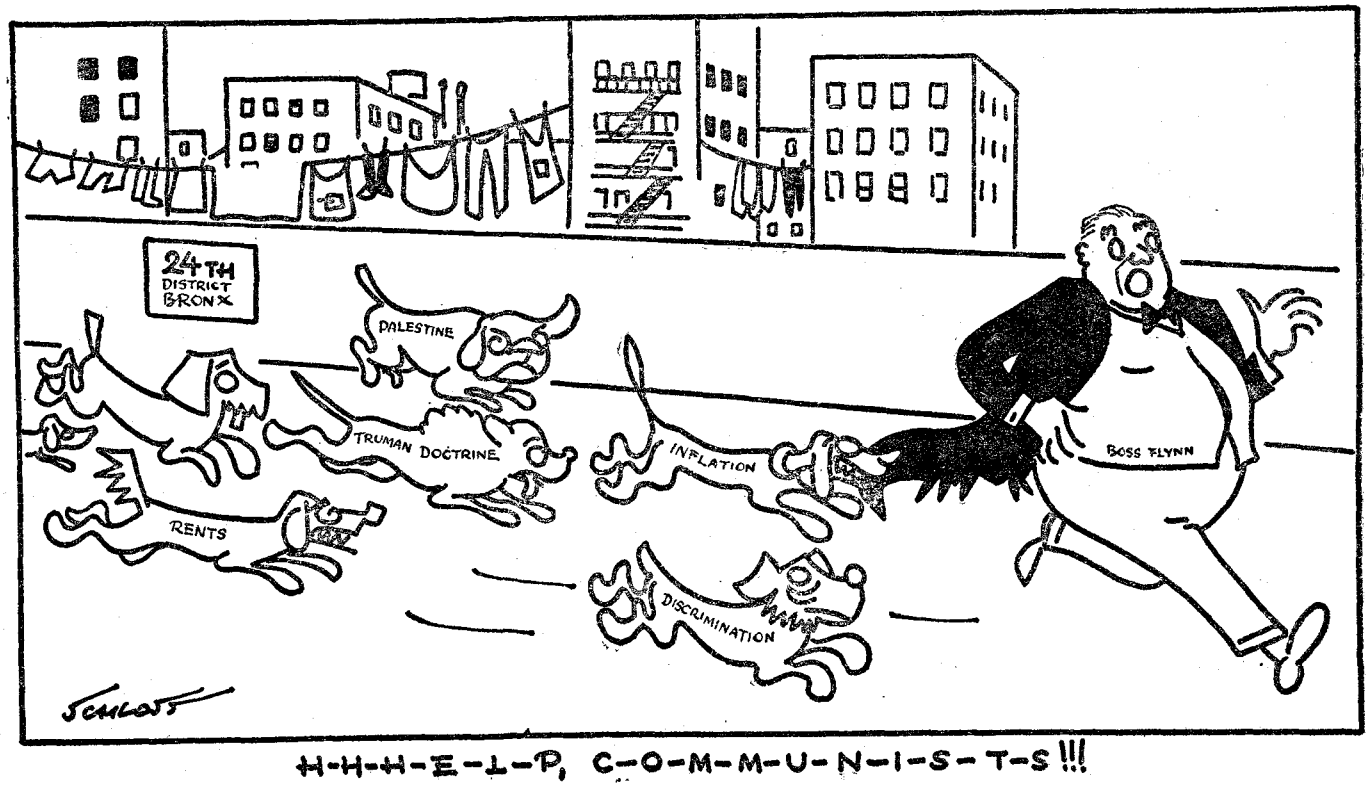
IN A TIME IN WHICH THE WORLD AS A whole seems bent on disaster, it is pleasant to record a few signs of sanity and good-will. One that has given us especial satisfaction is the shower of honors recently dropped on the head of Henry A. Atkinson, among



H-H-H-E-L-P, C-O-M-M-U-N-I-S-T-S !!!

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whose many claims to our gratitude is his active participation in the work of the Nation Associates. His thirty years' service as secretary of the Church Peace Union and World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches was celebrated a couple of weeks ago, and only last Sunday, Dr. Atkinson, along with the Reverend George B. Ford, received the Brotherhood Day award presented for outstanding "contributions to inter-faith unity." As chairman of the Council Against Intolerance —another of his multifarious activities—Dr. Atkinson has waged an unrelenting fight against racial and religious discrimination. In our view, one of his outstanding qualities is his willing acceptance of the obligation to have and express opinions. Too many men dedicated to brotherhood and peace use these excellent concepts as a substitute for a realistic appraisal of situations, for convictions, for action. Not so, Henry Atkinson. He takes positions, popular or otherwise, and if brickbats follow, he accepts those, too, as part of an honest fighter's reward. Lately, his highly intelligent and unresting effort in behalf of partition—Dr. Atkinson is also honorary chairman of the American Christian Palestine Committee—has done a great deal to mobilize support in Washington for the United Nations decision.

Who Runs Greece?

ON FEBRUARY 9, the British Ambassador in Athens called on the Greek Vice-Premier, Constantin Tsaldaris, and "requested information as to the competence of the new military head of the American forces in Greece, Major General James A. Van Fleet." The British Ambassador also made it clear that "the task of training the Greek army should remain in the hands of the British military mission."

The American press has not reported this visit. Ever since President Truman took Greece under his wing, there has been a strange silence in our papers concerning British policy in Greece and British relations with the Greek security forces. Last September, for example, the British police mission to Greece successfully obstructed the efforts of Prime Minister Themistocles Sophoulis to make changes in the higher echelons of the Greek gendarmerie. And last October, the British military mission ignored the Prime Minister's humble request for a discussion aimed at revising the make-up of the Greek general staff. There is no evidence that American representatives played any role.

The United States has allocated a total of $172,000,000 for military aid to Greece in the past eight months, and President Truman informed Congress on February 16 that he would request further military assistance for that country. Yet neither Congress nor the American people has been informed as to where American influence in Greece begins and how far it extends and where Britain's influence ends.

The dispatches from Athens made much of the fact that the chiefs of the American and British military missions, a representative of the American Mission to Aid Greece, and the chief of the British police mission would sit in on sessions of the Greek Supreme Council for National Defense. This would seem to put the Americans and British on equal footing when it comes to "advising" on matters concerning Greek security. But the agreement between the Greek government and the British police mission provides the mission's chief with mandatory powers under which he may "veto promotions and transfers proposed by the Ministers of Interior and Public Order if they seem to him deleterious to the service." Theoretically, the British military mission has only advisory powers, but its advice has been followed implicitly.

In agreeing to have foreign "observers" sitting in on the sessions of the Supreme Council, the Greeks were cleverly maneuvering, under British pressure, to remain in the good graces of both their great protectors. In this way, British feelings were assuaged, and a British finger kept in the pie, while the Americans were beguiled into believing they would have a large role in the formulation of Greek military policy; its execution is another matter.

The Americans supported the British military mission in its opposition to the removal of General Constantine Ventiris, former chief of staff, and only the combined stubborn pressure of the Prime Minister and Vice-Premier eventually forced him out of his command on the last day of January. At that time, A. C. Sedgwick wrote in the New York *Times*: "General Ventiris is known to have had the support of both the Americans and the British here as an able military leader, and particularly as a good disciplinarian *without a political ax to grind.*" (Italics ours.)

Undoubtedly, the British military men in Greece, who are deeply involved in Greek politics, convinced the Americans that such was the case. If the *Times* had checked back through its files it would have found that another one of its correspondents, Raymond C. Daniell, had painted a rather different picture of General Ventiris— and one for which the *Times* was threatened with a libel suit by the then Greek consul in New York. The truth is that Ventiris heads up a secret irredentist organization of army officers called R. A. N. (Rumeli-Avlona-Nisi, the future frontiers of a Greater Greece). A booklet issued by the royalist terrorist organization "X" in 1944 contains an agreement for joint action against the resistance movement signed by General Ventiris in behalf of R. A. N. and Colonel George Grivas for "X." General Ventiris left Greece in the spring of 1944 to attend the conference of Greek political groups in Lebanon; he then represented the "National Dynamic Organization."

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In his book, "The Greek Dilemma," William H. McNeill, who was assistant military attaché to the United States embassy in Athens between 1944 and 1946, has this to say about General Ventiris: "He was in the confidence of his British advisers and was able to surround himself with a personal following of relatively senior officers. These officers were fanatically anti-Communist and looked on King George II as the best stay against the red menace. Ventiris and his friends gained authority to make appointments in the whole army, and by that power came to control it." (This explains the motives of the Prime Minister and the Vice-Premier in pushing Ventiris out. He had too much personal power, and it was as great a threat to them as to the Greek left.)

Meanwhile, as jumbled press reports indicate, American officers are now in the front lines, and despite Washington's assurances that they are only there as "observers," some of them, sooner or later, will be hurt. What then? We do not recall any provision in the Truman Doctrine covering that contingency.

POLITICS and PEOPLE

BY ROBERT BENDINER

LEO ISACSON'S triumph in the Twenty-fourth Congressional District of New York underlines the whole sad paradox of Henry Wallace's current adventure. The more clearly he reveals the need for a national turn to the left the more he assures a right turn in November. Thus we have the frustrating picture of Republican leaders hailing as a sure herald of victory in the fall an election in which their candidate sank to fourth in a field of four and their party all but faded out of the political life of the district. While the Democrats polled only 31 per cent of the vote as compared with 43 per cent in 1946, a drop of 12 per cent in relative strength, the Republicans plunged from 19 to 3.6 per cent, a drop of nearly 16. These percentages do not, of course, reflect the actual political alignment in the district, since less than half the number who voted in 1946 took part in this year's special election, and the overwhelming number of stay-at-homes were regular party voters rather than those of the zealous and disciplined minority party. Yet with all due allowance for the abnormality of a by-election and the far from typical composition of this particular district, it must be plain even to Boss Flynn that the magnitude of the Isacson vote shows a marked trend to what is loosely called the left.

If this sort of demonstration were the sole purpose of the Wallace leaders and the experiment could be concluded well before Election Day, the net effect would be healthy in the extreme. The Truman Administration would have had precisely the kind of eye-opener it needed, and a rejuvenated Democratic Party might move on to a November victory based on a progressive platform, with performance to match. But this is a pipe dream of course, and nothing of the sort is at all likely. It will matter very little whether or not the Democrats take the Bronx lesson to heart if they are being readied for the kill in any event. And that appears to be the idea, for whatever Wallace himself may have in mind, the men who run his campaign are governed by one overriding purpose—to wreck the Marshall Plan. This can be done only by defeating the Democrats, if it can be done at all. The Isacson success makes the Wallace leaders more certain than ever that the Democrats can be beaten, and any notion that they will withdraw now, no matter how well the President performs, is too innocent to entertain.

If this appears to be too gloomy a view, it is not held because I mistake the Twenty-fourth Congressional District for the country at large; nor do I expect Marcantonio and Isacson to have much company in the next Congress, if indeed the latter is even reelected when he comes up again in November. The point is that nationwide sentiment for the third party is not necessary to elect a Republican. The Wallace movement has already shown enough strength to make a vital difference in New York, and it may be assumed that the same kind of appeal to minority groups and the economically hard-pressed—always easier for candidates who have neither responsibility nor any prospect of it—will be effective in other poverty-stricken city areas. That will be enough to tell the tale. On the basis of the Isacson victory most observers are ready to give New York's 47 electoral votes to the Republicans right now. Add 25 from California, where private polls show 11 per cent of the state's Democrats for Wallace, and 28 from Illinois, where the third party is making a determined drive, and you have an even 100 electoral votes for the G. O. P. Even if Wallace's name is never mentioned in the remaining forty-five states, this should be enough to assure the election of anyone the Republicans may put up.

What can the Democrats do in the face of those prospects? Obviously their only hope lies in wooing Wallace himself back into the fold, which Chairman McGrath is ponderously trying to do, or in waging such a determined and colorful fight to check inflation, enforce civil rights, and live up to our commitments in the United Nations that the Wallace vote will be reduced to its hard core of Communists. It is only this numerically insignificant group, hardly capable of electing an assemblyman, that would hold out against the Democrats solely to oppose the European Recovery Program. It is inconceivable to me that this was really the issue in the Bronx Twenty-fourth, a district heavily populated with those who have

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relatives in Europe to whom the Marshall Plan spells the difference between hope and despair. Given its composition, it was natural for the American Labor Party to hail the vote as a repudiation of E. R. P., but this is to be taken no more seriously than the claim that the results were a "mandate" to the President to release Eisler, Bittelman, *et al.* from the detention pens of Ellis Island.

It was extremely unfortunate that the President's first public pronouncement after the Bronx fiasco had to be at a Jefferson-Jackson Day banquet. Those affairs are notorious for the hollow oratory they bring forth in the quest for party harmony, and Mr. Truman surely did nothing to shatter precedent. The direction he marked out for his party was laudable enough. But rhetoric about "positive, progressive liberalism" unsupported by more than a hint of a concrete program is what is least needed at the moment. The only hope for Mr. Truman is to close his ears alike to the counsels of Confederate gentlemen and city bosses, to get down to cases, and to stick as close as he can to the spirit of Roosevelt (Franklin, not Theodore).

Behind the Struggle for Czechoslovakia

BY G. E. R. GEDYE

Prague, February 10

TO THE average Czech the most important thing about Russia is that when Chamberlain and Daladier brought about the destruction of the First Republic at Munich, Stalin offered to support the abandoned Czechs if they would defy Hitler. That made more impression than the Soviet treaty with Germany, which Russia observed until it was itself attacked and which secured Hitler against the dreaded "two-front war" and enabled him to launch destruction on the world within a few days of its signature. At the last elections the Czech Communists won 38 per cent of the votes without any violation of electoral procedure. The best estimates I could obtain were that probably only 18 or 20 per cent of those who voted Communist are reliable party members. But the first thought of every politically minded Czech is that across the frontier are 70,000,000 Germans whose most formidable natural enemy is Russia, to which Czechoslovakia was irrevocably tied by the Moscow treaty of 1943. This will always give the Communists a big share of the "floating vote."

Yet despite friendly feelings toward Russia and the fact that the Communists have made themselves the strongest party in the state without electoral improprieties, resistance to the threat of Communist control and to the severance of remaining ties with the West is stronger in Czechoslovakia than in any other Eastern European country. For unlike the others, Czechoslovakia has a long democratic tradition and a Western civilization stretching back to the days when Bohemia was part of the Hapsburg monarchy. Because Czechoslovakia is still a democracy, though to Western eyes a "democracy with a difference," you have in public life such notable men as Edouard Benes, Jan Masaryk, and Hubert Ripka. No worse miscalculation could be made than to think of these pre-war leaders as harboring any greater hostility toward the East than does any other Czech. It was Benes himself who signed the treaty of alliance with Russia—after failing to get guaranties of anything like equivalent value from either Washington or London. "It is thanks to the courage and statesmanship of Benes in all three capitals, but especially in Moscow," one Western political leader told me with impressive sincerity, "that we have today an independent Czechoslovakia, closely tied indeed to Moscow but not what, but for him, it would have become—the seventeenth state of the Soviet Union."

The bad health of President Benes, who is the embodiment of Czechoslovakian democratic traditions and patriotism, is not the least of the factors which make the near future so critical for the country. The doctors have told him that only a firm refusal to work at the furious tempo which has become his habit will enable him to prolong his years—a hard verdict for a man of his temperament to accept in these critical days. Should he have to resign, which is thought unlikely, a bitter conflict would break out over the succession. Gottwald and Fierlinger are the most probable candidates of the Communists, Masaryk of the non-Communists, with the possible result of a non-party man—Dr. Derer, president of the Supreme Court is mentioned—being elected as a compromise.

It is this background that provides an explanation of the resistance still offered to Communist dictatorial ambitions. It is also the explanation of the two real checks recently administered to Communist schemes. The discovery of politically convenient plots and conspiracies, a familiar Communist weapon in other countries, has already been tried out on a small scale in Czechoslo-

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vakia. But only recently, in the case of Slovakia, has the formula, "giving information to representatives of foreign powers," been included in the barrage of accusations in the Communist press.

IT IS generally agreed that the Communists reached their high-water mark at the elections of 1946. These were held in a still revolutionary atmosphere, in which the Communists had the advantage of the positions they had won by revolutionary methods on the collapse of the German occupation, such as the key posts in the factories. Since then their dictatorial methods and intolerance, especially toward Socialist workers, have greatly reduced their popularity. Curiously enough, however, Czechoslovakia's enforced reversal of its decision to attend the Paris conference on the Marshall Plan gave Communist stock a boost. This is how it came about: When Czechoslovakia accepted the invitation to Paris, Stalin sent for the Czechoslovak delegation which was in Moscow and told it that the Marshall Plan was deliberately directed against the Soviet Union. In consequence, he said, any country participating would be taking part in an anti-Soviet bloc. After this, no threats were needed to induce even the most right-wing member of the Czechoslovak delegation or government to decide that acceptance must be withdrawn. The Cabinet's decision to do so was unanimous. The public received a shock. For the first time it realized how closely Czechoslovak policy had been tied to Moscow by the treaty of 1943. The logical deduction was that the future lay with the Communist Party, and many people acted accordingly. But when the non-Communist parties made it clear that being tied to Russia need not deter them from resisting communism at home, there was a fresh reaction. The opportunists who had rallied to the Communists fell away, and Communist prospects for the general elections of May, 1948, began once more to decline.

It was at this moment, on September 9 last, that Premier Gottwald, the Communist leader, together with the strongly pro-Russian leader of the Social Democrats, Deputy Premier Zdenek Fierlinger, decided to try to jump the gun. In the absence from Prague of other prominent Socialists who were opposed to fusion with the Communists, they issued a statement signed by themselves and two other leaders of each party. Quite without authority, since they had not consulted their party executives, they declared that the two parties had decided "to collate their policy within the government." It was clearly a first step toward fusion. Some Communist propaganda posters asserted that it *was* fusion. Immediately a storm of indignation arose from the Socialist rank and file. Attempts by the leadership to represent this as a general declaration to which other parties in the government coalition could accede broke down. The other parties refused to consider the idea. They had just been particularly incensed by the dispatch of explosive parcels to three of the Czech Socialist Party ministers—Zenkel, Masaryk, and Drtina—in which a provincial Communist functionary in Olomouc seemed to have been involved, although the Communists said it was the work of an *agent provocateur*. Four days after the Gottwald-Fierlinger pact Majer, the Socialist Minister of Food, resigned in protest. Gottwald warned the country on September 16 that it must "definitely abandon the old political orientation," and that it was useless to evoke the names of Masaryk and Benes. On September 18 Laushman, the left-wing Socialist minister who had carried through the lightning nationalization of industry, stated that he could only accept the Gottwald-Fierlinger communiqué "with reservations."

On November 16 the important congress of the Social Democrats met at Brno. Laushman, the champion of Socialist independence, was chosen to replace Fierlinger as head of the party and resigned his Cabinet seat to devote himself to party work. Fierlinger also left the government and is now a simple deputy, with no party or state office. Erban, Socialist secretary general of the U. R. O. (Revolutionary Trade Union), was removed from the Central Executive Committee because of his support of Fierlinger. The Czech Social Democrats were strengthened by fusion, not with the Communists, but with the Slovak Social Democrats, formerly a separate party. Laushman, the new leader, is a man to watch—a strong personalty, popular, and determined to emphasize the worker rather than the intellectual element in the party. He is no right-winger like Majer. In terms of British Labor he might be called Czechoslovakia's Aneurin Bevan, with Fierlinger as its Zilliacus. He said to me: "You need not worry about the Czechoslovak Social Democrats. They are going to stay independent. Since the Brno conference we have had considerable accessions to our ranks, which will be reflected in electoral gains next May."

Unusually strong language was provoked by these developments. One Socialist dared to be heretical and said outright that the Soviet Union was not democratic. Vojta Benes called Fierlinger a "non-Czech." Fierlinger was minister in Moscow throughout most of the war, is sincerely convinced that for Czechoslovakia nothing matters but Russia's friendship, and is respected for that sincerity. The Communist organ, *Rude Pravo,* asserted ominously that "fascist speeches" had been made at Brno and that the election of Laushman in place of Fierlinger was a "supreme disappointment." Gottwald declared that the activities of the new Social Democratic leadership would be very closely watched.

The second reverse sustained by the Communists was in Slovakia. At the elections of 1946 they were left in a very weak position, after the Democrats, originally based on the Protestant element, had opened their ranks

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to the Slovak Catholics. In general the latter are reactionary and include many former fascist supporters of the war-time separatist Premier, Father Tiso, who was hanged last year. Incidentally, prophecies that the Czechs would pay dearly for making a martyr of this political priest have not been fulfilled. The Vatican did nothing to save him, since he had disregarded two warnings during his premiership against exposing himself as a fascist politician and allowing the deportation of Jews to the Nazi gas chambers. Immediately after his execution there were pilgrimages in his honor. But today Tiso is on the way to being forgotten.

Before the 1945 elections the church told the faithful: "You may not vote for a non-Christian party; when in doubt consult your parish priest." As a result, the Democrats have become a strong anti-Communist force; they would be less vulnerable to attack if they had been less ready to give sanctuary to reactionary elements. The Slovak Communists enjoy the advantage, of course, of complete cooperation with their comrades in the Czech lands. The Democrats suffer from the national division between Czechs and Slovaks, although an attempt has been made to bring them together through a compromise devised by the Vatican. In return for stronger support —by the Slovak Catholics and the Democratic Party— of the idea of a "Czechoslovak nation," the Czechs have agreed to go slow on the nationalization of church property; the Papal Nuncio in Prague has relinquished his claim to be doyen of the diplomatic corps.

The Communist offensive against the Slovak Democrats started with the discovery of the "Zilina plot" last September 16. This was an unconvincing affair in which the principal role was played by a Ukrainian who appears to have been an *agent provocateur*. It was supposed to involve a plan to assassinate President Benes during his visit to Slovakia. Then, at the end of September, the more serious "Bratislava plot" was unmasked, in which the fugitive Slovak fascist, Durcansky, was implicated. This man did, it seems, endeavor from abroad to establish a network of information and resistance posts within the country. The "Sidor plot" was the third—again, apparently, no very serious affair.

These revelations were followed by the arrest of two leading functionaries of the Democratic Party, Dr. Bugor and Dr. Kempny, and a carefully planned effort to get rid of the whole autonomous Slovak government—called the "Board of Trustees." Exploiting the existence of a black market in food and textiles, the Communists whipped up feeling against the Democrats by a series of elaborately staged street demonstrations. Land workers were brought by lorry to the capital, Bratislava, and on one occasion a drunken mob, headed, according to Prague newspapers, by "a notorious prostitute," stormed into the Diet and tried to seize the Democratic leader, Dr. Lettrich. In an attempt to force the resignation of the Board of Trustees the six members who are Communists, headed by their leader, Husak, resigned "on behalf of all the trustees." As there are fifteen trustees this was quite unconstitutional, and the Communists were successfully resisted. The essence of the attempted coup was the demand that two of the bodies the Communists control—the Slovak Trade Union and the Slovak Partisans—should be admitted to the national front. This latter body consists of representatives of the political parties and has the duty of electing the trustees. Acceptance of the demand would have meant that the Communists were represented three times over—as themselves, as Partisans, and as trade unionists. Although Gottwald himself came down to Prague to enforce acceptance, the Democrats refused to budge. In the end they had to yield three trusteeships, thus losing their majority on the board, but the vacated ministries did not go to Communists.

THE next few weeks are likely to be the most critical in the history of the Second Republic, since everyone knows that the Communists will not take their setbacks at Brno and Bratislava lying down. Well before the May elections they will certainly strike at their opponents; no one knows how or where. One finds the Czech Social Democrats, the Slovak Social Democrats, and the Slovak Democrats rather surprised at their own temerity and inclined to deprecate discussion of it. The Communists are well aware of this state of mind and encourage it by equivocal hints in speeches and in the press, pressure in the factories, and efforts to disrupt the other parties and the government coalition. People are anxiously wondering just what Gottwald had in mind when he recently threatened that "administrative action" might have to be taken against recalcitrants. Without Socialist cooperation the Communists would be in a minority, and the Socialists, although not prepared to refuse general cooperation, seem now to realize that they can themselves set limits and exact a price for it. But they are aware of the danger of being branded as "reactionary" and "fascist," with a Communist in charge of the Ministry of the Interior. The method of extending the ripples of a more or less genuine but minor plot until they involve prominent political opponents, as has been done in other Eastern countries, might not, it is held, work too easily in this stubborn democracy. Apart from these possibilities, what remains? A putsch with the help of the army, from whose higher ranks the Communists have recently removed many known antagonists? Again, the sturdiness of Czech democracy would make it risky. Perhaps a combination of several methods will be employed. What is quite certain is that the democratic institutions of this country—despite its genuine friendship for Russia and its willingness to permit full legal scope to the Communists—are threatened with imminent destruction.

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Del Vayo—The New Fascist International

Paris, February 19

ONE by one they are all turning up again. Pierre Laval himself would be back in French politics instead of in his grave if only he had remembered that Spain's Christian general wouldn't hesitate to betray his own mother for a price. Instead of running off to Spain, Laval should have hidden somewhere in France and waited for the enthusiasm of the liberation to subside and the government to arrive at 1948 conditions: today he would be back at his old stand selling "law and order," "private enterprise," and the anti-Soviet skulduggery for which he was notorious in the days of the Third Republic.

Just the other day Pierre-Etienne Flandin, making a triumphal reappearance at a dinner of the Alliance Démocratique, not only put in a claim for leadership in French politics but impudently, savagely ripped into the Fourth Republic: "We will never accept," he thundered, "the stigma of national indignity which dishonors not those so designated but those who apply it." Among the political qualifications of M. Flandin—known to Parisians during the occupation as "Herr Flandin"—are the following: he is the author of the historic telegram of congratulation addressed to Adolf Hitler; and he was Marshal Pétain's first Minister of Foreign Affairs!

With the former Vichy Minister being hailed by his friends of the Alliance Démocratique and described by the rightist paper *l'Aurore* as the white hope of France's moral regeneration, I should not be surprised to see his old boss, Pétain, totter back from limbo shortly to an even more enthusiastic welcome. Last week a new campaign was launched to free the Marshal, who missed sharing Laval's fate only because of his advanced age. The opening gun of the drive was a rally to demand a "new trial for Pétain" held at the Salle Chopin on February 10; the hall proved too small to hold all the admirers of the man Admiral Leahy once described as "the greatest living Frenchman."

The main speaker of the evening was Louis Rougier, who spent some time in America during the war working against the Free French and only recently returned to Paris after a sojourn in Switzerland, where he went in the interests of his political health. Like Flandin, Rougier believes in the old French army slogan—conveniently forgotten when the Nazis rolled in—that the best defense is an offensive. He promptly attacked the press of the liberation for having backed the "shameful measures" taken against members and supporters of the Pétain government. He denounced the Communists and the left as a whole and even chided General de Gaulle for his temporary aberration of 1940, though he hastened to add that today the General displays "the charity more than merited by the repentant." Rougier knows an ally when he sees one: he warmly congratulated Flandin on his brilliant speech and said of the opening of the Spanish border: "This will be a day of faith and rejoicing for those two grand soldiers, Pétain and Franco."

While the Vichyites were celebrating what Flandin called the coming "new French democracy," their black-shirt friends in a city of Italy were defining the "new Italian democracy" more pointedly—with knives and guns. The same thing can happen in France; this is only the beginning. Perhaps it will even happen in stolid, respectable Britain, judging by the insolence of Sir Oswald Mosley's latest pronunciamientos.

The new fascist international is taking shape. Not so long ago its leaders and propagandists considered themselves lucky to have got off with whole skins; today they are shouldering their way into every field of political and professional activity. On my recent visit to Italy I found notorious fascist journalists editing newspapers, apparently with government approval. Yet a sound anti-fascist like Carlo à Prato, who used to publish an excellent paper at Geneva, *Le Journal des Nations*, and for a while last year was head of the foreign-affairs desk of the Paris *Intransigeant*, can find no outlet for his articles except in the Socialist daily, *Avanti*.

The headquarters of the fascist international is obviously Madrid. Despite frequent, though not too insistent, demands from Washington and London, Franco still refuses to hand over the "hundred Nazis" wanted for trial as war criminals. According to rumor he would be willing to exchange them for a guaranty that Spain would be included in the Marshall Plan. Even though Mr. Bevin said, "No deal," the American Secretary of State told the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee that the United States was not opposed a priori to the inclusion of Spain in the E. R. P.; it was up to the sixteen co-operating states. Falangist circles are confident that Mr. Marshall will have the last word in this family disagreement. So one of these days Franco will probably hand over the hundred Nazis—and keep the forty or fifty others, the really important ones who got out on the last plane that left Berlin before the débâcle and landed in secret at a Barcelona airfield. Now that the French-Spanish border is open, the fascist tourist season will soon be in full swing, with Nazi and Falangist agents riding the circuit to check on old contacts and make new ones.

And all this has come about because of the split in the old Resistance forces and because of the encouragement given the fascists by Anglo-American diplomacy. In Germany Nazis are being appointed to many of the key jobs. The clerical right wing in France and Italy is sure it can count on American support. The next step will be to smuggle Spain into the Western bloc, with Franco's rule camouflaged, perhaps, by a pseudo-monarchist military façade. The Marshall Plan may be free from overt "political conditions," but even in advance of its adoption it has hastened the emergence of Europe's fascist and near-fascist leaders. After all, only a handful died with Hitler and Mussolini.

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The Strike at Di Giorgio's

BY CAREY McWILLIAMS

Los Angeles, February 17

AT JOE DI GIORGIO'S great 20,000-acre farm-factory in Kern County a new chapter is being written for one of the oldest blood-and-thunder "serials" in the history of American labor—the effort to organize farm workers in California. The familiar plot is continued, but some new characters have been introduced, and the tempo of the action has been stepped up.

On October 1 last year 1,500 workers on the Di Giorgio "farm" went on strike: the issue, union recognition. The union in this case was the Kern County Farm Labor Union Local 218, affiliated with the National Farm Labor Union of the A. F. of L., which was formerly the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. The strikers were promptly joined by the Teamsters' Local 87, which claims 128 truck drivers and loaders also employed at the farm. This was the first time in many years that one of the great California farm-factories had been struck by an A. F. of L. union.

Most of the members of the striking union are former "Okies" and "Arkies" who live either in company houses on the property or in nearby communities. They can hardly be called migratory workers, for employment of one kind or another can be obtained on the Di Giorgio farm during most of the year. In the months since October 1 the strikers have shown remarkable tenacity and have thus far withstood arrests, evictions, intimidation, and red-baiting. To give some idea of the difficulty of conducting a farm strike in California, I need only say that the picket lines of the union around the property are nineteen or twenty miles long.

In the first weeks of the strike the company attempted to carry on the work with a skeleton crew of supervisory employees, their sisters, cousins, and aunts, and some 300 Mexican nationals imported under government contract. After a great deal of pressure had been applied by the union, the Mexicans were withdrawn by the Mexican government and returned to Mexico. The company then sent its agents to the southern counties of Texas, where they recruited, by various fancy promises, several hundred other Mexicans. But now the Immigration Service stepped in and arrested forty or fifty of the recruits as illegal entrants, or "wetbacks"; so the attempt to use strike-breakers was not very effective.

At this juncture the company set out to break the strike with the aid of the Associated Farmers of California and its "rough-stuff" tactics. Since the mere mention of the Associated Farmers induces nausea in most Californians, great care has been taken to keep its name out of the strike news, but no one can mistake the source of the methods now being used. Tactics and generalship are right out of the book of the Associated Farmers. Moreover, Joe Di Giorgio has always been one of its principal financial angels.

On the eve of the strike Harold Ickes wrote a column calling attention to the condition of farm workers in California and made some acid comments about the Di Giorgio ranch. To counter the effects of this well-timed blast, the Associated Farmers promptly rigged up a "Citizens' Committee" which made an "investigation" and issued a report. The committee is of course merely a typical Associated Farmers hoax. Among its members are the publisher of the Bakersfield *Californian,* the owner of a chain of markets, the owner of a radio station, the president of the National Cotton Ginners' Association, an automobile dealer, a past president of the Kern County Chamber of Commerce, and two "farmers," factory style—not a single minister, professional man, laborer, or housewife.

Then the usual arrests began. Four strikers were taken from the picket line on January 9 charged with malicious mischief—the destruction of trees—and held in jail on default of $15,000 bail for each defendant! The public reaction to this arrogant piece of judicial blackmail was so adverse that the bail was later reduced. Two strikers were next charged with assault and held for $3,000 bail. Another striker, a minor, was arrested for fighting with a non-striker, who was let go, and bail was fixed at $1,000. To date twenty strikers have been arrested, and the union has been forced to post bail bonds totaling more than $70,000. Soon the evictions started, with local justices of the peace ordering families out of the company houses and sheriffs dumping their household goods on the highway. To round out the attack, Senator Jack B. Tenney of Los Angeles, chairman of the state legislature's ludicrous Committee on Un-Californian Activities, appeared on the scene to investigate the possibilities of Communist influence in a strike by a union which bars Communists from membership.

JUST what is the nature of the "farm" where this strike has been called? The Earl Fruit Company, an operating company owned by the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation, which is controlled by Joe Di Giorgio,

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operates twenty-seven farm properties in California under a system of centralized management and ownership and leases eleven others. It also buys a very considerable tonnage of fresh fruit grown by small orchardists. It owns eleven packing houses in California and packs and markets for other growers about a thousand cars of fruit each year. Having a 95 per cent interest in the Klamath Lumber and Box Company, with a capacity of 25,000,000 feet of lumber a year, it does not have to pay a profit on the boxes and crates used in shipping fruit. It owns two wineries in California, one of which is the largest in the United States, and is building another.

But Joe Di Giorgio is a fruit merchant as well as a fruit grower. The Earl Fruit Company owns the Baltimore Fruit Exchange and has important holdings in fruit auction houses in Chicago, New York, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh. In 1940, at the time of the La Follette committee investigation, the company employed 2,887 agricultural workers and had an annual pay roll of $2,400,000. Through a subsidiary the company owns 13,833 acres of orchard land in other states. In 1939 the book value of the land and improvements of the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation was $10,955,418, and its annual sales were in excess of $7,000,000.

Joe Di Giorgio now ships each year approximately 10,000,000 boxes of fruit and 500,000 packages of vegetables, employs around 10,000 workers, and in 1946 paid the government $1,614,817 in income taxes (these figures, of course, are for the combined operations of the parent company and its affiliates). Owing to the failure of Congress to enact any of the recommendations on farm labor which the La Follette committee submitted, this producing and marketing colossus still masquerades as a "farm" and enjoys exemption from all forms of social legislation so far as its farm workers are concerned.

The "home farm" in the San Joaquin Valley, where the strike is being conducted, has an interesting history. Joe Di Giorgio first became interested in the property in 1915 when he discovered, more or less by accident, that figs produced on it did not have to be protected against night and early-morning dew. Most of the 20,000-acre tract was purchased at about $90 an acre (it is now worth $2,500 an acre) and was improved at a cost of $275 an acre (these costs would now average $850 an acre). Senator Sheridan Downey, one of Di Giorgio's most enthusiastic admirers, explains that these intensive improvements could be effected at such a reasonable cost because of the "relatively cheap labor."

The unionization of the Di Giorgio "ranch" is the key to the question whether 500,000 farm workers in California shall remain social pariahs. At the present time the hourly rate for farm labor on the Di Giorgio ranch is 80 cents, which doubtless compares quite favorably with farm wages in other sections of the country and may even be higher than the prevailing wage in the San Joaquin Valley for similar work. But it is absurd to measure the "justice" of Di Giorgio wages by what cornhuskers are paid in Iowa or what the owner of a sixty-acre orchard, who is a farm worker himself, pays for his labor in California.

TO EQUALIZE, to some extent, the competitive position of "large farms" and "small farms," the large industrialized farms should be brought under the various forms of social legislation which now regulate the conditions of industrial employment. Until this is done, farm-factories will continue to enjoy a hidden subsidy in the form of substandard—by comparison with industry—wage rates and working conditions. The communities in which industrialized farming prevails will, moreover, continue to be saddled with heavy hidden social costs—for relief, hospitalization, medical care, and so forth.

The issue in the current strike is therefore really much larger than the question whether 1,500 workers are to be given union recognition. It is the question whether industrialized farm operations are to continue to enjoy preferential treatment in American agriculture. The townspeople and the small farmers of the San Joaquin Valley have perhaps a greater stake in this strike than the strikers themselves. It is the first major farm strike since the end of the war. Its outcome may determine whether or not farm employment in California is to revert to the wretched "Grapes of Wrath" pattern.

If Senator Downey wanted to square his advocacy of large farms with his avowed interest in labor, he would dust off the recommendations of the La Follette committee and ask for early hearings on them. The committee's five-point program called for enactment of the following measures: an Agricultural Employment bill to stabilize the agricultural labor market and to extend social security to farm workers; an Agricultural Wage Board bill to determine fair wages as distinct from minimum wages in industrialized agriculture; an Agricultural Labor Standards bill which would extend the benefits of the Fair Labor Standards Act to the employees of farm factories; an Agricultural Labor Recruitment bill to regulate employment agencies; and, finally, an Agricultural Labor Relations bill which would extend the benefits of the National Labor Relations Act to farm laborers in industrialized agriculture. Had these measures been enacted in 1942, the present Di Giorgio strike would have been avoided. They still represent the essentials for a sound farm labor policy in the United States.

Correction

In his article Battle for the Clergy in our issue of February 7, Carey McWilliams referred to the magazine of the Christian Mobilization movement as *Advance* instead of the *Meeting House*. *Advance* is the organ of the Congregational and Christian Churches.—EDITORS THE NATION.

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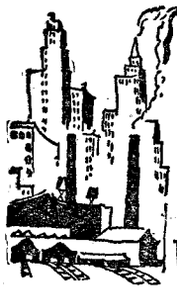

EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

Uncle Sam's Rubber Baby

WHAT is to be the future of that $700,000,000 war baby—the synthetic-rubber industry? Should it be kept a while longer in its government incubator, or can it be handed over to the guardianship of private enterprise? Is it strong enough to stand on its own feet, or must it be treated as "an infant industry" and protected from the competitive assault of the plantation-rubber industry, now rapidly recuperating after its four-year sojourn in a Japanese concentration camp?

These are questions which Congress must answer before March 31, when the government's present authority for controlling the relative consumption of synthetic and natural rubber, and so assuring a market for the former, will expire. It is not an easy task, for many conflicting interests are involved. The armed services want to insure against any future war-time famine of a vital raw material by keeping the synthetic industry in active operation regardless of economic considerations. The rubber-consuming industries are glad of a hedge against a possible future hold-up by the plantation interests but are chary of any scheme which involves permanent government interference with their business. The British and Dutch governments, which look to their rubber-producing colonies to earn large amounts of desperately needed dollars, will certainly object to any plan which threatens to limit their share of the market. And not to be forgotten are thirty million American automobile owners who want the best-quality tires at the lowest possible price.

Legislation which is now taking shape seems likely to satisfy only the first of these interests. A bill introduced by Republican Representative Paul W. Shafer and approved by a subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee provides in effect for indefinite maintenance of the status quo. If it is passed, the government will continue to own and operate the synthetic-rubber plants and will be forbidden to dispose of them to private enterprise without specific authorization of Congress. It will be required to maintain in actual operation or in standby condition plants with an annual capacity of 675,000 tons and to produce each year 225,000 tons, of which 200,000 must be buna-type rubber (G. R.-S.). To insure disposal of this amount an agency designated by the government will continue to exercise allocation, specification, and inventory controls over both natural and synthetic rubber. This agency will be empowered to dictate to rubber manufacturers the proportion of synthetic material which is to be used to make any particular product. Research and development will continue to be a government responsibility, but as a concession to private enterprise the war-time patent pool will be modified, and corporations or individuals will be allowed to take out patents on future inventions pertaining to synthetic rubber for their own benefit.

This measure does provide for an active synthetic-rubber industry capable of rapid expansion in time of emergency. But it does so, as H. E. Smith, president of the United States Rubber Corporation, has complained, by forcing synthetic rubber down the throat of the American consumer. Whether we like it or not, we shall continue to ride on tires with a large proportion of synthetic in their composition. Some experts tell us that this is no hardship: such tires are "just as good" as those made wholly of plantation rubber. But the fact remains that they have not won the same public acceptance, and that, at comparable prices, most motorists would reject them in favor of the natural-rubber article.

Although the big rubber companies are obviously unhappy about the Shafer bill, they would accept it as a temporary expedient if it included provision for reopening the subject in a year or two. They would like to get the government out of the rubber business, but they are not prepared at this time to take over the synthetic industry and risk being worsted in a competitive bout with natural rubber.

It is true that just now the position looks fairly favorable. Natural rubber has fluctuated in the past year between 14 and 25 cents a pound and at present stands at about 20 cents. G. R.-S. has been pegged at 18½ cents, and while detailed figures are not available, the government appears to be earning a fair profit at this price. However, there is no assurance that the price of rubber will not drop sharply in the next year or two. The Malayan plantations have recovered rapidly since the war, and now that there is hope of peace in the Netherlands East Indies, a big increase in shipments from there is expected. London brokers estimate that natural supplies for 1948 will total at least 1,300,000 tons, which compares with under 900,000 in 1938.

Potential production is still larger. An article in the *Journal of Commerce* for November 28, 1947, quoted industry and government experts as predicting an ultimate world output of natural rubber exceeding 1,600,000 tons a year. Add world synthetic capacity, and we reach a possible total supply of about 3,000,000 tons to take care of a probable average world consumption of but half that figure. Such a supply-demand situation suggests that if there is a free market, the years ahead will see a much lower price for rubber.

American synthetic capacity is a safeguard against the kind of cartel arrangement which mulcted consumers in the twenties and against even the milder restriction scheme which the British and Dutch governments operated in the late thirties. But, ironically, in order to maintain this safeguard, we must ourselves back away from the principles of free competition. In a genuine free market the "special-purpose" synthetics, which have a qualitative advantage in the manufacture of some kinds of rubber goods, might survive, but buna probably would not unless present costs of production could be drastically reduced. For plantation rubber might easily slip below 10 cents a pound before producers' losses forced curtailment of output.

Thus to maintain an industry which seems vital to our strategic and economic security a Republican Congress is relying on government ownership plus restriction of consumers' choice. That is socialism, say the rubber industrialists, with some reason. But we have yet to learn what alternative they are prepared to support.

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French Tactics in Indo-China

BY ANDREW ROTH

Saigon, January

THE night was "quiet" in Saigon. One heard only occasional bursts of machine-gun fire in the outskirts. I was at a gathering in a private home where one of the guests was a young French army officer. For my benefit someone asked him about the activities of his unit. He answered calmly: "This week the natives killed a buddy of mine. So we went to the area in which he was killed, seized several natives working in the fields, tied ropes around their necks, and dragged them behind our trucks. After we had gone several kilometers they were dead. We left their bodies beside the road as a warning." One listener, newly arrived in Indo-China, asked, "How could you do that?" The young officer seemed surprised at the question and replied: "Well, they killed my buddy, didn't they?" He did not see that such brutality bore a close resemblance to Nazi acts of terror in France.

In Europe the Frenchman is distinguished by his freedom from racialism. Here he is definitely conscious of belonging to a "master race." *Ces salauds* (these filthy ones) is the term usually applied by the French colonist to the inhabitants of Indo-China—or Viet-Nam as the *indigènes* prefer to call it. Discrimination is shown in the pettiest things. The French and the Viet-Namese have never been allotted the same ration for goods in short supply, like sugar and cloth; and during the war the French forbade the manufacture of Annamite sugar in order to increase the supply of the European-style product. Wage and salary scales have always been different. A Viet-Namese working for the government is paid only 60 per cent as much as a Frenchman in the same position with the same qualifications and seniority. In September, 1945, the French disbarred all Indo-Chinese lawyers, regardless of their political attitude, and required all who wished to practice again to make a new application. At the Cercle Sportif, Saigon's swank sport club, membership is restricted to "Europeans and assimilated," the latter being the Eurasians and the handful of Viet-Namese and other well-to-do colonials who have become French citizens. It is only fair to point out, however, that the discrimination in admission to theaters practiced in the United States is not found here. But there is a double standard of justice. Judge and jury in the courts are French, and Frenchmen get off very lightly for crimes for which the Viet-Namese often pay with many years' imprisonment.

ANDREW ROTH has spent most of the past year in India, Burma, Indo-China, and Siam and contributed a number of articles to The Nation. *A second article on Indo-China, describing the Viet-Namese resistance, will appear shortly.*

WHEN Georges Duhamel, the permanent secretary of the French Academy and president of the Alliance Française, visited Burma, I slightly flustered him at his press conference by asking whether France would not be wise to follow the example of Britain in Burma. Afterward he took me aside and said, "There are only two major conflicts in the world, that against communism and that against the colored races. In both of these France and the United States stand shoulder to shoulder. But we are poor and you are rich, and you must give us aid."

In Indo-China the French are conquerors and have all the characteristics of conquerors. The leading French-language newspaper, *Union Française,* carries in a box at the top of its front page a twenty-year-old quotation from France's great imperialist, Marshal Lyautey: "Claim the fine title of colonist, at this time above all when a whole school seems to deny the grandeur and effectiveness of France's colonial effort." Local Frenchmen were greatly excited when Saigon's prefect, M. Lami, a Socialist who has retained some of his Socialist ideas even in Indo-China, said in a broadcast over Radio Saigon that the cement of the edifice of the French Union would "no longer be hatred or oppression, but mutual understanding of duties and rights under equality."

The French have not scorned to use any instrument which might strengthen their grip on the country. They have even accepted the support of the Caodaoists, a religious sect which served the Japanese very efficiently from March to August, 1945. They are willing to forget that Tran Van An, Minister of Information in the puppet Cochin-China government, said over the Singapore radio in 1945: "I am well satisfied that the French pirates and assassins have been overthrown, and I await their complete extermination." They have no qualms about using 15,000 German soldiers in the Foreign Legion, almost all of whom are fervent young Hitler-reared Nazis.

Perhaps the reason the French in Indo-China do not stick at associating with persons and groups formerly pro-Japanese and with Nazis is that such a large proportion of them are former collaborationists. Even now letters appear in the press about "poor" Admiral Decoux, who decreed during the war: "French authorities will

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collaborate in all possible ways with the Japanese army and give it all facilities for its movements." Paul Gannay, head of the Banque de l'Indochine, was one of the foremost economic collaborators; he was in Japan from 1942 to 1946. Henri de la Chevrotière, political director of *Union Française,* sold his newspaper *Dépêche* to the Japanese for 200,000 piasters. Many Frenchmen fled to Indo-China from France to escape the penalties of having collaborated with the Germans. At the beginning of 1946 some four hundred Pétainist colonels were living in Saigon. Jules Haag, who was editor of *Le Jour,* the outstanding collaborationist newspaper of Paris during the war, is now editor of the *Journal de Saigon,* having come here as lieutenant colonel in charge of press relations for Admiral d'Argenlieu. Among the smaller fry are a number of persons who acted as informers and police agents for the Gestapo against the French *maquis.*

The marked anti-Americanism of French officials has its source perhaps in the mentality which caused France's colonial collaborationists to fire at the British fleet at Dakar. Every American is considered "an advance agent for American imperialism," and persons who are friendly to Americans run considerable risk. Sureté agents can usually be spotted in the United States reading-room and near the United States consulate-general in Saigon. Recently the cook of an American vice-consul was knocked down by a French military truck and his bicycle wrecked. The vice-consul asked for damages for him. The military police, however, arrested the cook, claiming that he had been distributing leaflets, although it was quite apparent that he had no political interests whatever. He was beaten steadily for two days and released only after repeated American efforts in his behalf.

A clerk in the United States consulate wanted to go to an American college, something which only two Viet-Namese have been able to wangle so far. When he asked the Sureté for a passport he was told, "You are entirely too friendly with the Americans." Shortly afterward he was arrested and charged with having run a post office for the underground resistance. He was kept in prison for six weeks despite strenuous protests by the consul-general. Before he was finally released, the consul was compelled to pledge that no publicity would be given to the arrest.

"THE best French are the new ones," a retired Viet-Namese official who had spent his life working with French administrators said to me. "When they come out here, they soon lose the democratic ideas they had at home. It is too comfortable to have other people working for you." To an impartial observer it is amazing to see former members of the French *maquis* and others who fought heroically for the liberation of their own country ready to fight here for the subjugation of Viet-Nam. When I asked a much-decorated French officer who had escaped from a Nazi prison how he could do it, he gave the stock answer: "After our defeat in 1940 we have to put up a good fight here or the world will think that Frenchmen cannot fight." Many young soldiers are told on the boat coming out that the anti-French movement is Japanese-inspired. Before they find out the truth on shore, some of them are killed by snipers, and the others naturally develop a hatred for the Viet-Namese.

A few Frenchmen have kept their democratic traditions. In February, 1946, about thirty French leftists, among whom were some army officers, signed a letter to Admiral d'Argenlieu saying that the only solution for the problem of Indo-China was to recognize its independence in the French Union and to cease fighting. Without their permission it was published in the Socialist newspapers *Avenir* and *Justice.* Several days later General le Clerc told his troops that these Frenchmen were "traitors" who had "stabbed French soldiers in the back" and wished to see them "thrown into the sea." That night French soldiers burned and destroyed the plant of *Justice* and damaged that of *Avenir.* A French major shaved the head of one of the women signers of the letter, put a sign "traitor" on her back, and paraded her up and down Saigon's main street under guard. He was not punished.

One Frenchman loyal to democratic principles, Jean Chesneaux, has been put in prison for his interest in the Viet-Namese cause, though no statute exists under which he can be tried since France is not officially at war with the Viet-Namese. Chesneaux was in the Resistance movement in Paris during the war and was sent here on a mission by the Bureau Universitaire Entr'aide of Geneva. He crossed the French lines to visit the insurgent areas and was picked up by a military patrol in September as he returned. Jean-Jacques Petalot, a twenty-three-year-old French army officer and former Resistance leader, was arrested at the same time. In 1940 Petalot printed an underground paper in Lorraine, for which he was tortured and held two years in a German prison. After the war he served with the French occupation forces in Germany and then was sent to Indo-China. A Communist, he became leader of the Marxist Cultural Group in Saigon—composed of some two hundred left-wing Socialists and Communists who oppose French policy here—and soon informed his superiors that he did not want to fight the Viet-Namese. He was transferred to the information service and constantly followed by secret-service agents. He made two visits to the Viet-Namese *maquis* and on his third trip, with Chesneaux, was arrested.

That is the situation in Indo-China today. A former hero of the French Resistance is in jail for making contact with the Viet-Namese resistance. The young Nazi soldiers in the Foreign Legion here must feel inclined to smile. They may have been defeated in France, but here their ideology seems to prevail.

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BOOKS and the ARTS

SARTRE'S "EXISTENTIAL COMEDY"

BY STEPHEN SPENDER

THE REPRIEVE. By Jean-Paul Sartre. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.

THE literary world is so sharply divided into the violent admirers and the violent detractors of Jean-Paul Sartre that it is difficult to write of him without falling into one of these two very deeply worn ruts. Perhaps therefore I should offer the credentials of my general attitude toward Sartre, as a reader of his fiction, his plays, and some of his criticism. Sartre appears to me to have a brilliant insight into certain theoretical situations. Put to him certain questions: "What is the position of the writer in society?" "What is literature?" "What is hell?" and you get an answer which seems entirely convincing until you see that it has only led you to the edge of the real problem. Poetry creates objects in words, uses words as a painter uses his paints, as colors and not as meanings; therefore it has no meaning as thought and can effect no action. Brilliant, M. Sartre, but in that case why do we think of Dante, Wordworth, Whitman, and Eliot as expressing attitudes toward life which imply a philosophy and a way of living? *"L'enfer c'est les autres,"* continues M. Sartre, who has passed on to the next subject. Wonderful, M. Sartre, but wouldn't it be equally true to say, *"Le ciel c'est les autres"*? Or perhaps not for the people in Sartre novels, but certainly for Dante in the "Divine Comedy."

M. Sartre leads us always to a gulf, the gulf where the hero is isolated in his existence, the art within its own inner functioning, the society within its hell of "the others." Then there comes the gulf and across the gulf, the jump of "engagement."

Now up to the point of the gulf and the jump Sartre's realism has many excellent qualities. He does present with horrible truth the ugliness of living of modern people in their relations with each other and with society. The description in "The Age of Reason" of the efforts of Mathieu to procure an abortion for his mistress, Marcelle, is a quite justifiable piece of sordid realism. For it is certainly right that a realist novelist should paint in its true colors behavior which many people think of today as a reasonable way of smoothing out the complications of promiscuity. Again, the description of the reactions of the men who are irremediably wounded "lie downs," victims of the previous war, in "The Reprieve," is no less than horrible truth about our modern world, which it is the clear duty of the realist to inflict upon us.

The whole surface of description and reportage in "The Roads to Freedom" is realistically convincing. Often when I am reading these pages in French I have the sensation of listening to the conversations of French people whom I know. The real wit, the hardness, the rather boring inquisitiveness, the grasp all the time of concrete motives and events, are overwhelmingly and oppressively conveyed in these extended conversations. At the same time, to the non-French reader, there is something disconcerting about Sartre's failure to create French virtues of which even in Paris today there is plenty of evidence: intimacy which is not gross, a real understanding of the value of personal relationships, delicacy, poetry, sense of shame and of sin, remorse. These qualities, which appear to me rather strikingly present in every Frenchman I like, are absent from Mr. Sartre's "realism."

The pattern of "The Roads to Freedom" is evidently intended to be the "Existential Comedy" of Sartre. The first volume is Hell, where the characters are occupied in tormenting each other in all their relationships; the second is Purgatory, the Gulf, where the characters are described in their relation or lack of relation to the social situation of their time, which is pressed upon their consciousness by the dramatic suspense of the eight days which preceded the Munich agreement. The third volume, "The Last Chance," will, I suppose, represent the Sartrean paradise of *l'homme engagé,* the man who by an arbitrary will to freedom engages himself in the problems of his time. Pre-

LADY BATES

BY RANDALL JARRELL

The lightning of a summer
Storm wakes, in her clay cave
At the end of the weeds, past the mock-orange tree—
Where she would come bare-footed, curled-up-footed
Over the green, grained, rotting fruit
To eat blackberries, a scratched handful—
The little Lady Bates.
You have played too long today.
Open your eyes, Lady.
Is it a dream
Like the ones your mother used to talk away
When you were little and thought dreams were real?
Here dreams are real.
There are no more dreams, no more real—
There is no more night, there is no more day.

When the Lord God and the Holy Ghost and the Child Jesus
Heard about you, Lady,
They smiled all over their faces
And sang like a quartet: "Lady Bates,
Is it you, the little Lady Bates
Our minister, one Sunday evening,
Held down in the river till she choked

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In a white dress like an angel's, red
With the clay of that red river? Lady,
Where are the two we sent to fetch your soul:
One coal-black, one high-yellow angel?
Where is night, where is day?
Where are you, Lady Bates?"

They looked for you east, they looked for you west,
And they lost you here in the cuckoo's nest
Eating the sweet white heart of the grass. . . .
You died before you had even had your hair straightened
Or waited on anybody's table but your own.
You stood there helping your step-mother
Boil clothes in the kettle in the yard,
And heard the girls go by, at play,
Calling to you in their soft mocking voices:
"Lady-Bug, Lady-Bug, fly away home."

You are home.
There is a bed of your own
Here where a few stones
Stick up in the tall grass dried to hay—
And one willow, at the end of summer,
Rustles, too dry to weep for you,
And the screech-owl sheers away
And calls, *Who, who*—you are afraid
And he is afraid: who else could see
A black ghost in the dark?
A black, bare-footed, pig-tailed, trifling ghost
With eyes like white clay marbles,
Who haunts no one—who lies still
In the darkness, waiting
While the lightning-bugs go on and off?
The darning-needles that sew bad girls' mouths shut
Have sewn up your eyes.
If you could open your eyes
You would see nothing.
Poor black trash,
The wind has blown you away forever
By mistake; and they sent the wind to the chain-gang
And it worked in the governor's kitchen, a trusty for life;
And it was all written in the Book of Life;
Day and Night met in the twilight by your tomb
And shot craps for you; and Day said, pointing to your soul,
"This *bad* young colored lady,"
And Night said, "Poor little nigger girl."

But Death, after the habit of command,
Said to you, slowly closing his hand:
"You're a big girl now, not even afraid
Of the dark when you awake—
When the day you sleep through
Is over, and you awake,
And the stars rise in the early evening
An inch or two over the grass of your grave—
Try to open your eyes;
Try to reach to one, to the nearest,
Reach, move your hand a little, try to move—
You can't move, can you?
You can't move. . . .
You're fast asleep, you're fast asleep."

sumably the scene will be the Resistance movement, and it will be interesting to see how Sartre overcomes the difficulty that today even this heroic action appears an ineffective example of *engagement*.

In order to extend his picture to its deepest and widest, Sartre borrows devices such as the interior monologue of Joyce and the musical-chairs method of John Dos Passos. I call it the musical-chairs method of writing modern fiction, because the author can easily be imagined as keeping his readers running round uncomfortably while he introduces quite arbitrarily any theme he chooses from a world having little relation to the action of his characters. As one theme runs into another without any artistic reason—that is, without any inevitability arising out of the action of the story or the lives of the characters—the reader is not so much a spectator of a drama as a victim of M. Sartre, who for no reason except that he is trying to depict a very large scene feels free to let loose amid his characters any event whatsoever which may have happened in October, 1938, in any part of Europe. This method, which has the excuse that it is borrowed from the cinema—where it is in fact outmoded—is simply a journalistic device for rapid novel-making. If the situation of a novel does not grow out of the interior life of the main characters, then ultimately it destroys the reader's interest in them, because their significance shrinks as unrelated external events are showered down over them. This is what Tolstoy understood when he made Napoleon a living character in "War and Peace" not a journalistic *deus ex machina* whose actuality makes one aware that Prince Andrew and the Rostovs are not "real." The result of Sartre's not understanding this is that the second volume of his trilogy becomes bogged down by the external matter which is introduced. One is more interested in conversations between Hitler, Neville Chamberlain, and Daladier than in the fact that Daniel, the pederast who is a friend of Mathieu, has, for very arbitrary reasons, married Marcelle, who is thus enabled to have her child. One's interest in the novel shifts from the main characters and story to the reportage and to certain very striking incidents, unrelated to the main plot, which are introduced.

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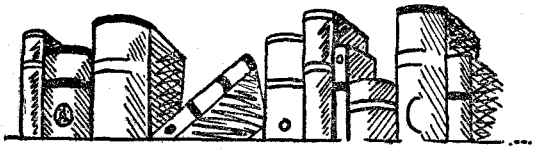

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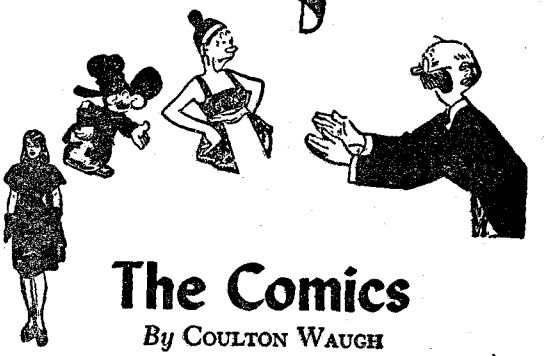

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Some of the minor episodes of the novel make excellent short stories which one can piece together from the fragments in which they are scattered. For example, there is the macabre and terrifying story of the love affair which takes place in a railway coach between two of the "lie downs" who are being evacuated from the coast. And the adventures of Philippe, the boy who models his life on the career of Rimbaud, are extremely amusing.

Sartre's novel illustrates the tremendous influence of the American novel on French literature at the present time. Ultimately, this influence may prove the most important of the century, and one can already see, in "La Peste" of Camus, that when it is reconciled with the narrative tradition of "Candide," the French gains from the wideness of social vision got from the American models. Possibly the problem of Sartre is that his gift is really that of a short-story writer, and that in attempting a trilogy he is the victim of the enormous inflation of his own reputation. Or possibly the example of the American novel has seemed to offer him a way of extending his own talent for describing externals and extending his considerable gift of dialogue into these great dimensions. But whatever may be the explanation of this puzzling excursion "The Roads to Freedom," the main problem of the novel—to create the wide external scene and situation within the inner lives of the main characters and within the development of a story which, whatever its ramifications, remains single and organic—has not been solved. It remains to see whether the third volume creates a unity of experience which puts the first two volumes into a perspective which will revise this judgment.

STEPHEN SPENDER

What Is Architecture?

AMERICAN BUILDING: THE FORCES THAT SHAPE IT. By James Marston Fitch. Houghton Mifflin Company. $5.

THE great service of "American Building" is that it achieves a new, clear, basic formulation of what architecture is about, of what it does or can and should do, in *operational* terms rather than stylistic ones—and in a simple descriptive manner that any educated layman can completely understand. This is far more important and comprehensive than at first it sounds. The book, in fact, is indispensable today.

Nearly a quarter of a century ago Lewis Mumford, writing "Sticks and Stones," a history of the same events, impressed upon the reading public of the United States that architecture is a *social* art. At about the same time we became aware, through the electrifying language of Le Corbusier, that architecture strives in an industrial age to be an *industrial* art—and no less art. Still later, through Giedion's "Time, Space, and Architecture," a somewhat smaller audience became aware that architecture, again as an art, is reconstituted by what mathematical theoreticians now think about the matrix of *physical organization*—time and space, matter and motion.

Since then every one of these leaders has bogged down, either through failure to achieve a further recognition of what is going on in the world, or through fear of what strict adherence to new recognitions might do to vested ideas of what is "human," or through a short-circuit which led them back always into mere problems of visual expression. Thus Mr. Mumford's battle with himself over "the machine" begins to look like a compulsive struggle rather than a liberating one. In the same way Frank Lloyd Wright, once of almost incalculable importance, has turned vocally against "science" in the name of "religion" and "art" and now uses his undoubted powers of magic to spread charm over ever more equivocal stunts in formalistic and megalomaniac drama. In Europe, where the new knowledge and the new power it confers have proved utterly beyond the capacity of a decrepit culture to manage them, the architects, bruised and bewildered, are turning to a confessed dilettantism, making pretty things which are significantly reminiscent of the Wiener Werkstätte period that predated 1914, when the débâcle began. The scared leaders of architecture, like the scared leaders of politics, urge return and return and return; and too many of them confuse this run for safety with progress in the direction of "humanism," or some new "style," or even of religion. No exception, but merely the same defeat in an-

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other mode, is the return of Russia to official classicism.

A cue to at least part of this dis-ease is found in the declaration of the once creative *Architectural Review* of London that the "revolution" it had been fostering was a "visual" revolution; and this misidentification of a part of architecture for the whole was made at just the moment when the new visual forms that had been achieved were manifestly disintegrating in England.

By contrast, the healthy insight which permeates the book by Mr. Fitch is the genuine belief that architecture is now, and always has been, something greater than a visual art, even though aesthetic experience is a prominent part of it. Like many a great insight, it is arrived at by viewing steadily those facts which are too commonplace for the prophets of high style. Instead of putting "architecture" into his title Mr. Fitch concentrates modestly on "building." He thinks about those things which architects are daily concerned with, in a more or less habitual way, and rarely talk about as "art." He arrives at "the complete inadequacy of existing criteria for analyzing building performance. . . . Consciously or unconsciously, explicitly or implicitly, judgments based on vision have dominated architectural opinion: Have you *seen* the new Jones house? What does it *look* like? It *seems* somehow out of scale; it doesn't quite *express* its function. . . ." But why not, he goes on, "Have you *heard* the new Jones house? What does the kitchen *smell* like? How do the stairs *feel?* Do the windows *get on your nerves?* Won't the sink be *tiring* for the cook?" For the truth is that in building we try, first of all, to set up not an impression but a condition—not just a visual environment but a compound superimposition of environments involving every bodily function and response—"atmospheric, thermal, luminous, sonic, spatial, animate."

The systematic exploration of these environments by the author in the light of modern science and technology—all in simple terms which all can understand—is like the exploration of a new continent. This is not routine "functionalism" which vaguely recognizes that

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valid forms grow out of valid purposes. If it were, it would offer nothing basic that was not already to be found in Talbot Hamlin's "Architecture Through the Ages," with its repeated intuitions in this direction. No, the cumulative effect of the detailed exploration is to give building and architecture a new dimension, such as medicine achieved the minute it began actively to dissect and sort out the organs of the body.

The effect of such an exploration is to recapture and fasten down those earlier intuitions of architecture as a social, an industrial, an organizational art which predecessors of the author contributed—and also to bring the chance of valid judgment closer to the consumer. Unless this can be done, the best work will go unappreciated—if, indeed, the best work ever can be done without such social interaction between architects and enlightened citizens in large numbers. To the discussion of a "democratic aesthetic" Mr. Fitch brings the recognition that the *reaction* of the individual takes place within the *standard* of his social group.

Mainly the discussion is carried on by observation of buildings, of experiments, of historical development in building, creating a wealth of incidental information, making engrossing reading.

The review is written in envy, since the author has come to this formulation ahead of the reviewer, who had found himself compelled to follow a very similar line of inquiry in attempting a comprehensive article on architecture. It is possible, like Sinclair Lewis's Arrowsmith, to testify to the validity of the discovery. It is possible also to suggest further development and application. For one thing, further discussion is needed, in the same terms but based less on building than on planning—the direction of approach that has distinguished Mr. Mumford. For another, as a next step it should be possible to carry the thought of architecture as controlled environment beyond the province of just building. Thus, for example, in the TVA some 40,000 square miles have already begun to be reconditioned as a human setting, mostly by treatment of the great out-of-doors, affecting not only the physical features but even the climate: this is architecture in its new dimension and at its new scale. Once again, if we are to treat of the enjoyment of this architecture we must find a word more comprehensive than "aesthetics."

All this, however, is unimportant in comparison with the fact that "American Building" is now available; for the moment certain areas of disagreement can be ignored. There is available now an example of operational thinking in architecture: of seeing the problem in terms of the full twentieth-century scientific potential and achieving art without retrogression. DOUGLAS HASKELL

The Forgotten Human Being

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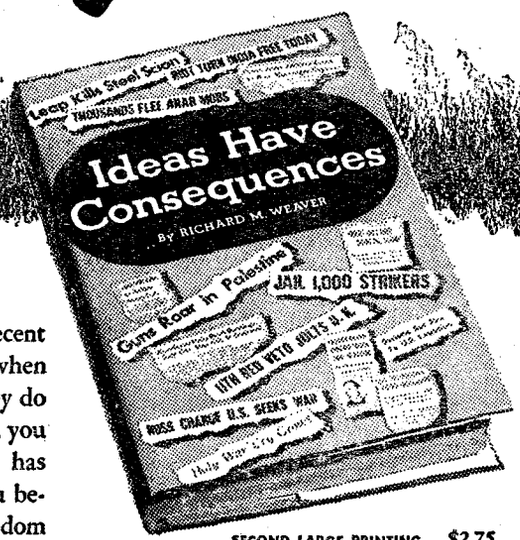
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who believes in our cause, or the man allied with us in a common enterprise, or the virtuous or the intelligent man. He believes that "human personality should be scrupulously respected and that all human beings, irrespective of such 'accidents' as their degree of virtue or what they may or may not have done to us or to others, are ultimately and spiritually equal."

I doubt whether Mr. Gollancz's concern is adequately expressed in his own proposition, for he is interested not so much in validating the equality of all men as in pressing the claim which all men have upon us, whether they be friend or foe, by reason of a common humanity. He finds this common humanity, and the humaneness which flows from its recognition, threatened not so much by social pride as by vindictiveness.

His book is filled with the tragic stuff of modern history, particularly the brutalities and cruelties perpetrated by "righteous" men and nations in the aftermath of a war designed to destroy Nazi cruelty. He challenges the indifference of civilization toward the new evils which have arisen because victor nations and peoples have no compassion upon suffering men if they happen to belong to the camp of the vanquished.

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Gollancz's indictment acquires added weight when his own spiritual history is considered. He called attention to the meaning of Hitler's concentration camps when it was still fashionable among many to minimize the significance of Nazi brutalities. He helped Europe, in his "Let My People Go," to understand the plight of the Jews in the aftermath of the Second World War. He is a Jew with a natural interest in the future of his people. But he is above all a sensitive and great soul who understands both the dignity and the misery of man above and beyond all the particular historical vicissitudes which occasion the suffering. It would be good for the soul and the conscience of the Western world if this little book were placed in

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the hands of thousands upon thousands, and more particularly in the hands of all the complacent souls who are beguiled into new brutalities by the fury of their resentment against brutality.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

Life of the Hero

LETTERS OF RAINER MARIA RILKE. Volume Two, 1910-1926. Translated by Jane Bannard Greene and M. D. Herter Norton. W. W. Norton and Company. $5.

FOR Rilke it was a long grim Lent, from the Ash Wednesday of "Malte Laurids Brigge" to the Easter of the "Duino Elegies" and the "Sonnets to Orpheus." A dozen years, more or less; a dozen years of wandering, mendicancy, solitude, and self-distrust. For two hundred pages this volume testifies, above all else, to the last, which must have been hard for Rilke to bear; it is also a little tedious to the reader, even though he knows that the hero will come out more than all right in the end, even though he knows that a fraction of that emphasis on self-assurance would have been completely intolerable. Curiously enough, the improvement in tone begins with the war years: Rilke seems for a short while to have accepted the war as a good thing, not in a vulgar national, chauvinistic manner, but as a great spiritual experience, sweeping the ego out of itself; and when this mood wore off, as it did of course quickly, it is as if thereafter the war, almost like a strict verse form, by imposing limitations, excluding excursions, compelling compliances, forced the artist to triumph over the scheme: so that when Muzot was offered he came there prepared.

The self-distrust can hardly have been a matter of Rilke's choosing; the solitude was. "I see but one law," he wrote, "relentlessly commanding: to lock myself into myself and in one stretch to end this task that was dictated to me at the very center of my heart." Things, objects, seems to have come first with Rilke; these he felt sure of, at home with; these he could transform, without interference. Nature next; and animals; then, rather shyly, children: adults, fellow-artists, last of all, and only on rare occasions. When he lived in Paris (of all places!), "I saw," he writes,

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"spread over the years some eight people (and people who gave rather than received), the natural isolation . . . of my inner domain." And in the same letter he points out, to Frau Knoop, that it is always more impossible for him "to live in any place where I might become so fond of people that I give myself out to them too gladly and variously."

This anti-social side, this withdrawal from human beings—except noble patronesses—this passion for solitude, this insistence on the hermetic life of the artist, could so easily seem like a pose, smugness, snobbishness, conceit. It could, except for two things: Rilke worked hard, without shirking the rigors that his choice imposed; and over and over he recognizes that his way is no absolute, not the way for everyone, only his way, his because of the limitations of his strength, because of the urgency of his calling. "Producing art is a most simple and most stern calling, but at the same time a destiny." To this destiny he devoted himself; narrowly, perhaps; intensely, surely. And he did not rule out the possibility that stronger men could do two things to his one, and that both their life and art could be improved by a closer symbiosis.

His great heroes were Rodin, Tolstoy, Cézanne: Gide he knew, and Verhaeren, and Valéry; Proust he admired as early as 1913, when "Swann's Way" was first published at the author's expense. Jacobsen seems to have been more important to him than Kierkegaard; Ellen Key was his friend for a while, and he seems to have tried to induce Reinhardt to do something for Duse. To music, apparently, he did not come close: the index to the two volumes of letters lists one passing reference to Bach, five to Beethoven, none at all to Mozart. Of English he knew enough to translate some of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's sonnets; and Shaw, through Rodin, he had at least heard of; his letters do not indicate that he had ever heard of Eliot—another generation or so, and the "Duino Elegies" and "The Waste Land" will seem to belong almost to the same moment of our century—or of Yeats, or of Joyce. And no American, in those spacious days of the Favorable Exchange and the Great Intellectual Ferment on the Left Bank, made pilgrimage in Rilke's direction. He might not have been receptive to such visitors. "From America" (but this was in 1925), "empty indifferent things are pouring across, sham things, *dummy life.*"

For all our impatience, our occasional irritation, with Rilke and his struggles, their often pitiful, sometimes maudlin aspects, we cannot close this volume of letters without a feeling that in the end the just man was rewarded; we cannot help partaking to some extent in the jubilant rejoicing that came his way when the sonnets and elegies were done, in that great storm of brightness, and he looked on them and knew they were good. We can smile, almost for the first time with him, as he feels entitled to relax in Paris—"I discovered in myself a lively need of meeting quite new people and of coming into contact with new circles." It would seem almost blasphemous impudence to want Rilke to have had more fun, and yet . . .

And yet . . . there is one other thing that makes us wonder a little. Is it possible that the editors have, however unconsciously, been a little too selective with the material available to them? Did Rilke all those years always sleep alone? did he always exhort, never scold? never blast the jerks and phonies of his time, never quarrel with his publishers, stall a creditor, or dun for a debt? never make a wisecrack? never show a touch of all too human malice? Our times and our tempers, no doubt, conspire against our taking him for a model. But grant the possibility of the occasional exception, and the model should stand there in its naked glory, with a rough spot here or there, not all the surfaces smoothed, and forever free of the least shadow of suspicion that it has been tricked out, no matter how little, in trappings of impressiveness.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES

Life of Mirabeau

MIRABEAU. By Antonina Vallentin. The Viking Press. $5.

AFTER Leonardo and Heine, Mme Vallentin comes to Mirabeau. These were all rich natures, abounding in some expansive quality never very satisfactorily pinned down to a name, at least in English. (Our own generation attaches this quality innocently to sex, and has innocent and short-lived words for it—sex appeal, "it," oomph.) Perhaps Mme Vallentin will tire of this

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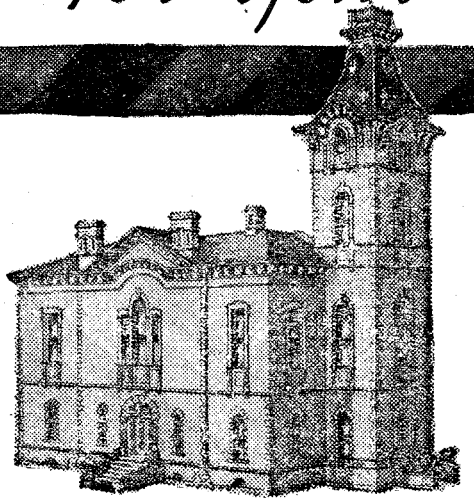

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rich fare and try next time a more chaste if not less complex figure—Pascal, for instance.

This life of Mirabeau is confusingly full of almost but not quite repetitious detail. The cast of characters far exceeds in number that of the most large-scale novel of Tolstoy or Balzac. Lawsuits and judicial proceedings of *lettre de cachet* within the ferociously quarreling Mirabeau clan pile up into an indistinguishable clutter. Love affairs are even more numerous and confusing, since as a rule they last a much briefer time than the lawsuits. Mme Vallentin seems herself finally to tire of recounting Mirabeau's achievements as a lover, and like the sports writer who has exhausted his vocabulary of elegant variations on the home-run batter, has in the end to record quite simply that en route to Berlin, staying very briefly at Frankfort, he still had time for an "intrigue." The lady's name is not even mentioned.

In spite of, and no doubt partly because of, all these details, Mirabeau himself does not seem in these pages a person who has undergone living. The biographer, like the novelist, has to face a test which, as each individual reader makes it, is fairly clear and simple, however difficult the reader turned critic may find the task of analyzing and verbalizing the terms of the test. It is simply this: are his characters alive? The biographer, having passed this, must face a further test: are his characters objectively, fairly, related to their historical surroundings? Lytton Strachey's General Gordon, for instance, most certainly is alive; but he is probably not General Gordon. Mme Vallentin, not having passed the first test, cannot really come up for the second. But there is plenty of evidence that she is thoroughly familiar with eighteenth-century society, and that her difficulties were not primarily with the historian's part of her task.

It is hard to be sure why this book is not a complete success. It has none of the obvious faults of a really bad biography. It has, save for touches of strain in Mme Vallentin's style, few of the marks of the *biographie romancée*. It neither worships nor debunks its hero. It seems to carry no particular political or moral gospel. Mme Vallentin, as a good disciple of the late Stefan Zweig, works hard as a psychologist; but here too are no marks of the doctrinaire. Perhaps the chief weakness of the book is the obvious one: it is so crammed with details, above all so crammed with people, all so very active, talkative, and rebellious, that the ordinary reader feels a bit like an outsider brought, quite without introduction, into a large but intimate cocktail party busily defending a dozen unfamiliar causes and destroying half a hundred unknown reputations. Yet there is also a deeper difficulty, a difficulty that faces more especially the biographer too preoccupied with psychology and neglectful of the awkward discipline of sociology. Mme Vallentin's people, and even her hero, are unreal to a modern American reader partly because she doesn't tell us enough about their beliefs, their habits, their assumptions, their routines. For example, Mirabeau's activities as a financial writer are extremely hard to understand without some explanation of the eighteenth-century stock market and its manipulation, and this Mme Vallentin does not give. Against a background of mere quarreling and lovemaking, mere writing and speechmaking, human as those activities are, these French men and women of the old regime and the early revolution do not quite seem human.

Just because of its crowded personal detail this book will be of great interest to anyone familiar enough with the French eighteenth century to move around in it comfortably. It is quite the most complete, and in some ways the most useful, book on Mirabeau in English. Mirabeau was an important person, one of the makers of the technique of revolution, one of the earliest modern practitioners of a rare and difficult art. And like any net cast into the past, the book fishes up some oddities. In 1779 Mirabeau, in prison, writes to Sophie, the greatest of his loves, "Alas, if we were at Boston, . . . I should be useful and esteemed, and my daughter would be an American, that is to say, born in the midst of the most estimable nation on earth." French intellectuals don't write that way today.

CRANE BRINTON

A Narrow Canon

THE LAST OF THE PROVINCIALS. The American Novel, 1915-1925. By Maxwell Geismar. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

MAXWELL GEISMAR'S studies of H. L. Mencken, Sinclair Lewis, Willa Cather, Sherwood Anderson, and F. Scott Fitzgerald sound like lectures—good lectures—to undergraduates, informal and rather loose in phrasing, and with a sense of the needs of a relatively unread audience. "Perhaps you ought to keep in mind," he says, apropos of incest in "Tender Is the Night," "that this is a deep and abiding theme in the arts from the time of the Greek 'myths.'" Geismar never discusses a book without giving such a full and lively account of it that it becomes interesting to a person who has never read it, and although he makes use of important current ideas in his interpretations, he does not refine or elaborate these ideas so that they would be difficult for a popular audience to follow. He likes the terminological freedom of such statements as "The realm of the Freudian Id has also become a sort of mercantile unconscious which is sensitive only to the stimuli of a money society."

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Geismar's general method is to discuss each author separately, and the author's works separately in chronological order, in a dramatic, almost musical sequence of recurrences and returns, of themes and counter-themes, and contrasting movements.

This makes good reading if it is taken simply as informal discussion and review, for although much that Geismar says about his five authors has already been said in the vast deal written about them in the last twenty years, he makes enough fresh observations and makes them vividly and coherently enough to justify the book. But when "The Last of the Provincials" has to be judged as part of an ambitious five-volume reinterpretation of the development of the American novel, it becomes deficient in governing idea. Far from being a reinterpretation or a fresh approach, it represents a narrowing of an already narrow canon that was very much a product of the thirties. Although he was influenced by Brooks and Parrington, and has borrowed insights from T. K. Whipple and J. W. Beach, Geismar is closest in spirit to Granville Hicks's "The Great Tradition," to Malcolm Cowley's collection, "After the Genteel Tradition," and to as much of Marxist criticism as can be accepted by one who is not himself a Communist.

What Geismar looks for in his writers —and therefore of course always finds —are the harmful effects, spiritual, psychological, and artistic, of living in the final stages of finance capitalism, when a cartelized industrialism has destroyed local individualism, and when the dominance of the economic motive has taken from the writer all sense of a social function. And though it is hard to see, according to Geismar's sociology, how the writers could avoid being disorganized by their social circumstances, and though he does not offer or even mention affirmative Marxism as the solution, he criticizes these writers, just as the Marxists used to criticize them, for not "facing the socio-economic factors," for "retreat from society," for "evasion of a social environment." The chief emphasis is on what these writers might have been if they had not refused to see clearly the role of cartels. And so there is not enough emphasis—though Geismar is appreciatively capable of making it, as he shows in his excellent study of Willa Cather—on what is just as important sociologically, the positive effect these writers did have on American taste, imagination, and modes of thought, the reason why their work "worked," the distinctive achievements that led to European recognition of our whole literary movement when Lewis was given the Nobel prize.

As soon as one mentions Europe, the chief weakness of Geismar's general approach becomes clear. He uses his socio-economic causative scheme quite uncritically, and especially fails to test it by the comparative method. His reminder that the incest motive did not originate with Scott Fitzgerald or American literature is almost the only such reminder in the book. Otherwise Geismar's criticism of provincialism, of lack of historical perspective, in Sinclair Lewis applies quite as much to himself. A glance at the index proves this. "The Last of the Provincials" is a study of American experience and creative imagination; yet there is no serious attempt to define precisely what "American" means *per genus et differentiam*.

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It is a study in social influence on literature; yet there is no attempt to see whether similar literary effects have not been produced under quite different social circumstances. A student reading "The Last of the Provincials" might suppose that the artist's alienation from society, his rejection of its dominant values, were peculiar to America in the twenties, and that only under finance capitalism were farmers driven from the land or whole societies filled with a melancholy sense of transition, decay, or possible doom. A student might suppose that Scott Fitzgerald's crack-up was quite unrelated to the long series of such crack-ups since the beginning of the romantic movement, and that the flirtation between philistinism and aestheticism in "Main Street" had not been preceded by similar flirtations in the suburbs of London and the provinces of France forty and more years earlier. It is only by seeing what American literature has in common with other literatures that we can appreciate what is distinctive and characteristic in it, and hope to discriminate the range of causative elements. Geismar isolates his material from many of its real sources and explains everything according to a useful but incomplete scheme of relationships very insecurely established in the thirties. By not using his studies to test, criticize, and qualify that scheme Geismar has diminished, it seems to me, the chance that his ambitious and genuinely appreciative series will add as much as it should to our understanding of the literary process.

ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS

"Primitive" Painter

HORACE PIPPIN: A NEGRO PAINTER IN AMERICA. By Selden Rodman. The Quadrangle Press. $12.

THIS beautifully designed monograph appears a little over a year after Horace Pippin's death. It reproduces nearly half of Pippin's one hundred paintings in large clear plates, four of them in color. Mr. Rodman's text includes an informative account of Pippin's life, an unpretentious and illuminating analysis of his development during fifteen years of painting, a brief comparison of his career to that of Henri Rousseau, and a check list of all known works.

It is not extreme to say that Horace Pippin is our best "primitive" as well as our best Negro painter to date. On both counts, however, the competition is limited, though by no means unimpressive. A broader estimate might place Pippin below Rousseau among self-taught artists, and decidedly above Bombois, Vivin, Pickett, and Kane. It is remarkable that Pippin retained the freshness and power of his visual imagery in the ten years following his "discovery" and inevitable exposure to the trends of contemporary art. Under such conditions the so-called childlike sensibility often shrivels, and nothing replaces it. "Shell Holes and Observation Balloon" (1931), dating from the first years, is already a strong design, and the petunia-like craters work a haunting visual impact. The later compositions are more complex in color relationships and in juxtaposed patterns, including those subtler ones made by spaces between objects. But they too have an immediate pictographic force,

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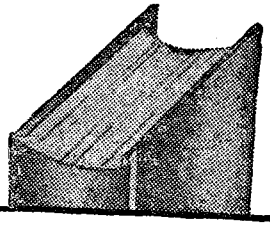

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like those Egyptian drawings which are not merely conventional. One assumes that such art springs from visual memory; it is reassuring to learn that this was actually the case in the "Portrait of Christian Brinton" and "The Den."

Pippin's memories of World War I have about the same thematic importance as Rousseau's recollections of Mexican jungles. "Barracks" (1945) complements "End of the War: Starting Home" and "Shell Holes," which are among his first paintings. Mr. Rodman thinks that all three rank among the greatest of war pictures. I would not compare them to Callot, Goya, or Grosz, and certainly not to Picasso or Uccello. But "Barracks" does attain something of Goya's concentration.

Pippin's strength lay in his innocence, and it had a strong religious basis. Mr. Rodman remarks, in contrasting the "Crucifixion" with Gauguin's "Yellow Christ," "For Gauguin, the Savior and the 'dumb peasants' who accord him their devotion are alike symbols of a curious vanished faith for which the artist yearns but which he does not remotely comprehend. For Pippin, as for the early Italian primtives, Christ is a man who suffered, and by the depth of his sacrifice for man a God." Shall we say, without implying any condescension whatever, that Pippin was fortunate enough to live only partially in our modern world? It is certain that he never consciously opposed it, as Ingres opposed his world a century ago. Therefore he never had to contrive an escape, as Ingres did. Nevertheless, Pippin was incompletely a man of his time. For better or worse, is it not one of the requirements of greatness that the artist be exposed to everything and shielded from nothing?

I do not accuse Mr. Rodman of sentimentality about the childlike mind, but I think he makes too much of it. There is need for someone seriously interested in modern art to urge that childlike art can never become more than minor art, and that it is rather rarely superior to the art of children, which has its own place in minor art. I do not minimize the importance of minor masters, whether childlike or not. America has produced too few of them, and perhaps no great painter whatever. It is valuable to distinguish between authentic minor art and major art that does not come off. The failure to arrive at greatness does not confer minor status. The intention itself must be minor and carry through as such. Pippin seems to me to be a good minor painter for just these reasons. Paul Klee, who captured the childlike by exquisitely self-conscious means, is another—a more important painter but a minor one. It is also worth observing that minor art stems from minor art, and that great art feeds on great art. Michelangelo derived from Jacopo della Quercia, Donatello, and Signorelli, and not from his master, Ghirlandajo. Simone Martini, one of the supreme minor artists, developed from Duccio, who was no Sienese Giotto.

Mr. Rodman's comparison of Pippin's "Crucifixion" to the Italian primitives is misleading, unless he refers primarily to painting before 1300. Beginning with Giotto and Duccio, Italian painting is "primitive" only in the sense that it is early, and not at all in the sense that Pippin can be called a "primitive."

It may turn out that modern primitive art, whether childlike or sophisticated, has at long last reached a dead end, as impressionism did around 1890. Beautiful impressionist paintings were painted long after 1890, but sterner spirits looked elsewhere.

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Economics and Welfare

THE KEYNESIAN REVOLUTION. By Lawrence R. Klein. The Macmillan Company. $3.50.

STUDIES IN THE THEORY OF WELFARE ECONOMICS. By Melvin Warren Reder. Columbia University Press. $3.

KEYNES has many critics in this country. Professor Schumpeter has attacked him from the right, and Professor Paul M. Sweezy from the left. But he also has his prophets and disciples like Professor Alvin Hansen of Harvard and Professor Harris, also of Harvard, who only recently edited the "New Economics," evaluating Keynes from many angles. And now Dr. Klein, a brilliant young economist from Chicago and M. I. T., has produced the latest of a crop of books on Keynes—a thorough appraisal of the development of his thought on economic policy and its theoretical justification.

Keynes's contribution has many facets, but Klein concentrates on two—employment and money (including, of course, problems of saving and investment), or to put it negatively, unemployment and monetary disturbances such as inflation. Klein proves that Keynes's formal theoretical reasoning was often developed after he had already made the relevant policy recommendations. This may be of some comfort to general practitioners of the economic profession. The main value of Keynes's latter-day policy recommendations lies in their flexibility.

The town criers of the New Deal presented Keynes as a great advocate of public spending. The reason is obvious. Most of the practical proposals made by Keynes during the thirties were largely directed against unemployment, "the chronic disease of the time." Keynes pointed particularly to the problem of unused resources and became the apostle of expansion, giving inspiration to many writers in the field of hortatory economics.

However, Keynes also advocated measures to control inflation in periods of full employment, and numerous

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Keynesians who advocated monetary expansion in periods of unemployment are now beating the drums for anti-inflationary controls, especially taxation, price control, and rationing. On the other hand, many advocates of laissez faire who feared inflation in 1935 now urge tax reduction. The gist of Keynesian fiscal policy is to recommend heavy deficit spending in periods of unemployment and heavy anti-inflationary taxation and forced savings in periods of inflationary danger.

Fiscal policy is functional; it can be used to make a system function regardless of social objectives. It is indeed possible to follow all precepts of Keynesian fiscal policy and to achieve full employment by spending for armaments. However, Keynes was not a military expansionist. His social philosophy, as Klein shows convincingly, was that of a capitalist reformist who believes that the capitalist system is prevented from functioning properly by artificial obstacles. He maintained that such obstacles could be overcome by government action primarily in the monetary and fiscal field.

Keynes complained that the economic system existing before the war in the United Kingdom and the United States failed to solve the unemployment problem, and he suggested specific cures. But he did not have any fundamental objections to the capitalistic market mechanism as an instrument for the allocation of economic resources. Even though he was an iconoclast who ventured beyond the frontiers of "Laissez Fairyland," he still used time-honored tools of analysis. In fact, as Klein argues cogently, Keynes belongs to the neoclassical school of economics, deviating from its theories only in part.

Klein addresses himself to the general social-science student as well as to the professional economist. Professor Melvin Reder, however, in "Studies in the Theory of Welfare Economics," writes almost exclusively for theorists. Keynes's own contribution is not used directly, although the theoretical machinery produced by Keynesians is much in evidence. Reder probes already beyond the frontiers of the existing body of economic doctrine. He builds on the soil of welfare economics discovered by the original classicists, enriched by the fertilizing ideas of Pigou, Hicks, Lange, Lerner, and others. His main analytical objective is to broaden the basis of welfare economics by developing a theory applicable to processes of change as well as to positions of equilibrium. In other words, his book is a study of the dynamics of welfare economics.

In his attempt to determine policies for the attainment of maximum welfare the author distinguishes carefully between advocacy and analysis. One of the main policy goals is to achieve optimum allocations of resources. Obviously, when there is heavy unemployment, an increase in employment is unlikely to misallocate resources. However, Reder argues that as the volume of unemployment decreases, an increase of output and employment becomes less likely to increase welfare.

Unlike certain other economists, Reder does not use this argument against full employment. On the contrary, he shows a way out of the dilemma by recommending that restrictions on the mobility of resources be smashed. His proposal is a "modified full-employment policy" as opposed to an "ordinary full-employment policy." There will always be workers moving from one industry to another, but these men need not suffer loss of income while they are in transfer.

Persons attached to industries or occupations which are overcrowded, Reder suggests, should be offered opportunities to retrain themselves for fields in need of additional personnel, with the government paying them current wages for their current occupation. Thus unemployment would not involve any personal loss to the unemployed or any diminution in expenditure and production. If more than the optimum number chose to leave an occupation, the government would subsidize mainly the retraining of the younger workers. Workers too old to retrain advantageously could be subsidized to remain at their jobs. This recommendation is not offered as a panacea, but the author deserves credit for his attempt to prevent misuse of theoretical findings which could have given arguments to enemies of economic and social welfare.

There is one flaw in this volume on welfare economics. The American economic system is viewed in isolation, without regard for its responsibility toward the world. Reder concludes: "Broadly speaking, one of the advantages of our great wealth is that we can afford to waste. As we become increasingly rich, it becomes increasingly unnecessary to scrimp in order to get the very utmost from our resources." These words must sound strange to European or Asiatic readers, and in all fairness to Reder, we must quote the succeeding sentence: "Even if we were to grant (which we do not) that guaranteeing every individual a job in his present occupation were subversive of welfare, viewed ex post, we would still argue that we are rich enough to bear the loss in the name of social peace and good order."

This means, roughly speaking, that the United States can afford to keep people in occupations which are socially not of optimum usefulness. However, Reder knows that it is possible to achieve full employment with optimum use of resources; he even shows how to do it.

In spite of this flaw Reder like Klein

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is a theorist with a conscience. But while Klein's economic narrative will be read by many for a few years, Reder's theoretical pioneering work will be read by a few for many years.

HENRY SIMON BLOCH

Drama

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

THE indomitable Eva Le Gallienne is appearing at the Cort Theater in a revival of "Ghosts," which is to be followed by "Hedda Gabler." Those of the reviews which I have read were a good deal less than rapturous, but the performance is an intelligible one, and it serves at the very least to make clear to anyone who has never seen the play performed just why it became the most famous stage piece of the nineteenth century. Where the production fails is, I think, in its announced attempt to be a "modern" interpretation. Miss Le Gallienne herself has made a new translation which seems—though I have made no textual comparisons—reasonably flexible and probably somewhat more easily credible as the speech of actual people than the standard Archer version. But neither she nor Miss Webster, who directs, have done much in the way of achieving that shift in emphasis which is necessary if the play is to be completely revitalized for the ordinary audience of today.

When it was originally written, "Ghosts" was obviously intended to be a good deal more than merely a play. It was Ibsen's first fully matured demonstration of his own revolutionary techniques and of his conception of what the subject matter of the new drama should be. It was a manifesto which he hoped would be read and pondered far beyond the bounds of the theater. He was, as he said in so many words, one of those who believed that there was a definable complex of ideas and convictions and attitudes which could be called "modern"; that, as he put it, "a great gulf has opened between the past and the future." "Ghosts," with its involved story, its neat symbolisms, and its careful making of "points," was intended not only to define this "modern" attitude toward respectability, duty, and the right to happiness but also to provide a kind of test case. If you understood and approved of what the play said, then you were a modern; if you did not, you belonged to the past. And it was, of course, as just such a test case that the play was accepted. In theater after theater all over Europe it was used by advanced groups as a demonstration of intentions. One critic in England called it "a dirty deed performed in public." Over here William Archer denounced Ibsen as "not only dull himself but the cause of dulness in others." He also compared Ibsen's plays unfavorably with such a masterpiece of true drama as "Jim the Penman." But radical intellectuals accepted the challenge. They went to see "Ghosts" in much the same spirit that members of a previous generation had gone to see "Hernani." It afforded the best possible public occasion on which to show where they stood.

The present production, though a bit drily academic and a bit lacking in passion, is, as I have already said, one which makes the intellectual points of the play with considerable clarity. But for good or ill the "modernism" which the play expounds long ago won its battle so completely that its most daring paradoxes now often sound perilously close to platitudes, and no production which keeps them in the foreground can well escape the air of being a demonstration of what hardly needs to be demonstrated. If the play is capable of being made to live fully again, that can only be done by making effective the emotional rather than the intellectual values, by remembering that the author certainly thought of it as a new kind of tragedy as well as an argument.

Some part of this Miss Le Gallienne and Miss Webster succeed in doing. They see that the play is in part the personal tragedy of Mrs. Alving, who found too late the courage to be true to herself, and that it is at the same time the cruel comedy of Parson Manders, who discovers that reality has at last broken through the wall of timidity and pretense behind which he has attempted to protect himself. Some years ago Mrs. Fiske starred in a curious production of the play in which she tried to make it primarily a kind of comedy without going quite that far. Miss Le Gallienne is at her best in those scenes where she is ruefully aware of the joke on Manders, which is also a good deal more than a joke on her. But she and the whole cast miss almost completely the atmosphere of morbid horror which should be the dominating one. The final scene of Oswald's collapse is sheerly and brutally repulsive. And Ibsen has prepared the way for it by recurrent brief returns to the theme of madness and disillusion. He could, I kept reminding myself, have given points to Tennessee Williams in the art of suggesting an all-pervasive morbidity. And it is just the scenes which ought to create this effect which the present production fails to take advantage of, partly no doubt, because the Oswald is far too young and merely boyish, but also because the full import of certain crucial scenes is never communicated by any of the members of the cast. To begin with, the setting of Mrs. Alving's drawing-room is much too cheerfully Victorian and seems almost to give the lie to the repeated references in the text to the sunless gloom in which the lives of the characters are being passed. But that is perhaps a minor matter, and the real failure is the failure to get the true morbid feeling in the two or three scenes of ghastly gaiety which bring this aspect

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of the play to a focus. Perhaps the chief of them is the little champagne party staged by Mrs. Alving for Oswald and Regina. This, Mrs. Alving is realizing, is what the joy of life comes to when the very springs of life have been fatally poisoned. And I could not help wondering what Mr. Kazan, for example, would have been able to make of such a scene. It would not, I think, seem old-fashioned.

"The Respectful Prostitute"

BY MARGARET MARSHALL

THE brief drama by Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Respectful Prostitute," now playing at the New Stages Theater at 159 Bleecker Street, is a rather remarkable tour de force. It is a play by a foreigner about a situation indigenous and peculiar to America which gives an authentic picture of that situation and at the same time owes much of its power to the fact that it is so clearly the production of a foreign intelligence and imagination. For while Eva Wolas, who adapted the play, undoubtedly did some creative editing, it could not be mistaken for an American play. Finally it is a play in one act of two scenes which has the impact of a much longer piece.

The foreigner happens to be a Frenchman, a dramatist, and a philosopher—a formidable combination. As a Frenchman M. Sartre gets a little distance on the white American's attitude toward Negroes, which, also as a Frenchman, he finds senseless. As a dramatist he recognizes the conflict as the stuff of tragedy, and he has hit upon the classic sequence in which this tragedy has worked itself out so often that it has the familiarity and inevitability of a folk-tale: A white man commits an act of violence against a black man; the black man is accused of having raped a white girl; the mob gathers, a black man is lynched, and white supremacy is reasserted. Whether or not the rape actually took place becomes irrelevant, though the sex element is pervasive.

As a philosopher, and especially perhaps as an existentialist, M. Sartre perceives this conflict to be a question not merely of relations between races but of relations between human individuals. It is this insight, I think, which accounts for both the authenticity and the power of the play. It enabled him, in the first place, to get the picture accurately, as no amount of observation, however acute, would have done. More important, it enabled him to universalize our peculiar institution and therefore to show it to us in a fresh perspective.

In M. Sartre's play the girl in the case is not a member of the Southern community in which the action occurs. She is a prostitute, Lizzie McKaye, who has just come from the North and is unfamiliar with the ways and the values of the South. She is an outsider through whose naivete and puzzlement the author makes many a point. Her own Northern horror at the idea of being touched by a Negro is particularly telling; so is her surprised and angry observation to the innocent Negro that he is acting as if he were guilty. M. Sartre has spared no one.

As I have said, "The Respectful Prostitute" could not be taken for an American play. There is, for instance, a large French infusion in the characterization of the prostitute and particularly in her talk about sex. Yet one feels, not that this talk is out of character, but that it is a kind of basic talk which goes on everywhere outside the jurisdiction of the Hays code. The attitudes and behavior of the Southern whites are oversimplified, but in the direction of caricature rather than of misrepresentation. I was particularly interested in Sartre's handling of the one Negro in the play. It is very difficult for American writers to portray Negroes without specializing them in one way or another. This presents no problem for M. Sartre; and the Negro in this play strikes me as far more convincing than Negroes in American fiction or drama because he is not "a Negro" but simply a human being falsely accused and in danger of his life at the hands of other human beings.

The play has one weak passage which has nothing to do with the race question. The plot revolves around the "ordinary" decency and the self-assured intransigence of the prostitute, Lizzie McKaye. The Southern Senator persuades Lizzie to sign the fatal, and to her at once hilarious and fantastic, statement that she has been raped by the Negro; he persuades her to sign it by appealing to her respect for her betters, like himself and his family, who carry the burden of making this country great. This appeal to the outcast has psychological validity in the abstract; it just doesn't seem valid for that very concrete individual, Lizzie McKaye. I must say, however, that this bothered me less at the time than it has since.

The play is well staged, well cast, well directed. The acting in general is very satisfactory, but the performance of Meg Mundy as the respectful prostitute is much better than that. Lizzie McKaye,

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as Miss Mundy portrays her, is naive and smart, gay and dead serious, tough and soft—it is a most convincing and touching characterization, the creation of a good playwright but also of a very intelligent and talented actress. I was particularly impressed by the fact that Lizzie at the end looks quite different from Lizzie at the beginning—as if she had actually been through the events of the play.

One amusing and significant detail: Lizzie has brought with her from the North a vacuum cleaner which she obviously prizes. She likes to use it, she says, on the morning after—and she does use it with a will. This seems to me a delightful French commentary (with American props) on the American sense of sin and exorcism by gadget.

Music

B. H. HAGGIN

THE jacket of Virgil Thomson's new book, "The Art of Judging Music" (Knopf, $4.25), a second collection of his reviews and articles in the New York *Herald Tribune,* quotes one of the weirdies that Edmund Wilson gets off now and then: "With the exception of Virgil Thomson, not one first-rate critical journalist has appeared since Woollcott's time." Wilson cannot be expected to know about the musical journalism comparable with Thomson's that appeared in the remote region of the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle* some years ago; but he can be expected to know the difference between a Woollcott and a Thomson. Taking first-rate critical journalist to mean someone with both journalistic and critical equipment that are first-rate, one can expect him to know that even Woollcott's journalistic equipment was a limited style which got to be a few tiresome mannerisms, and that it was the medium for limited critical insights and sympathies which in time could not be taken seriously, whereas Thomson operates with a critical apparatus of perception, understanding, and intellect which would make his writing important even without its additional delights of felicitous and witty statement.

One can't, it is true, always depend on Thomson to use that apparatus. He is the one critic with ears capable of hearing and a mind capable of making something of what they hear; but he is also capable of spinning out ideas and phrases about material imagined to fit into those ideas and phrases, which as a result may be impressive or interesting or entertaining but have no connection with what a reader experiences as the realities of the subject the writing is supposedly concerned with—the qualities of the Guilet Quartet, of the pianists Levant, Borovsky, Maryla Jonas, of the conductors Krueger, Ormandy, Toscanini (Thomson has moved a step closer to reality here: he now perceives Toscanini's powers as a musician; but he is still a distance away from it when he has Toscanini operating only with musical, not with imaginative, powers, and producing "just ordered sound and very little else"—which mere lack of perception caused me to say myself years ago). Having no connection with the experienced realities of its subject the writing may not even make understandable sense in its own terms—when, for example, it is about French rhythm, or French almost anything. Or it may do the real performance an injustice, the artist—in the real situation where his career is determined by New York press criticism—an injury.

The present collection has things of this kind; but on the other hand it is filled with things as accurate in perception and felicitous in expression as the statement that "for all the technical mastery displayed and all the real musical excitement provoked, Horowitz's playing is monotonous and, more often than not, musically false. He never states a simple melody frankly. He teases it by accenting unimportant notes and diminishing his tonal volume on all the climactic ones. The only contrast to brio that he knows is the affettuoso style." Or the statement that the Boston Symphony is over-trained, and as a result "the music it plays never seems to be about anything, except how beautifully the Boston Symphony Orchestra can play." Or the statement that one doesn't notice the condition of Povla Frijsh's voice, "so skilfully does the artist use it as a means of revealing a song rather than for any intrinsic qualities it may formerly have possessed. She doesn't exactly sing a song, in the concert sense of singing; nor yet does she merely speak it. She shows you how it goes. And she gives a deep musical pleasure." Or his statement about Howard Hanson's "habit of working anything, literally anything, up to a fever-like climax and then letting it fall with a gasp. This procedure turns any short piece into a 'Liebestraum' and any long one into a series of Liebesträume,' " and about Hanson's having written "lots of music that lots of people have enjoyed listening to, and that makes him a real composer. But I have never yet found in any work of his a single phrase or turn of harmony that did not sound familiar"—which makes him not "a very real creator." Or the reference to the "mud and sugar of Rachmaninov's Second Symphony."

And there are also many superb large-scale performances like the articles on opera-production, on the life-cycle of choruses, on the expressive, intellectual, and ethical content of music, on the misuse of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, on the Rodzinski–Judson–New York Philharmonic fracas, on the Koussevitzky attempt to suppress the Moses Smith biography—any and all of which I would, as I said once before, be glad to have been able to write myself.

One first-rate critical journalist whom Wilson overlooked—right in the *Herald Tribune* too—was Edwin Denby, whose article on dance criticism in the current issue of *Kenyon Review* has given me the pleasure I always get from his wonderfully clear and luminous writing. I have also enjoyed some of the material in the symposium on "Stravinsky in the Theater" skilfully assembled by Minna Lederman for a triple-issue of *Dance-Index.* And the remarks on Stravinsky were among the things that delighted me in Sir Osbert Sitwell's account of the opera and ballet seasons in London before 1914, in a chapter from his new book "Great

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Morning!" that I read in the *Atlantic Monthly* a couple of months ago.

He writes, for example, that after one performance "I was excited to see the Russian composer, the master of the epoch, walk before the curtain. Slight of frame, pale, about thirty years of age, with an air both worldly and abstracted, and a little angry, he bowed back with solemnity to the clustered, nodding tiaras and the white kid gloves that applauded him sufficiently to be polite." Remarking on how little this audience comprehended "the nature of the great musician to whom they were doing honor, or the often eschatological import of his work," he points out that nevertheless, "by one of the most singular paradoxes in the history of art, the tiaras and the gloves at least were *there,* doing him honor from the stalls and boxes; whereas the audience that should have been in their place, the advanced painters and musicians of England, convinced that nothing aesthetically good could come from such a quarter, rigorously abstained from being present at any performance at Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Thus the enthusiasts for beauty missed, for some years, the most vital influence in the art world. Few of them saw Diaghilev's ballet until 1918." From which he concludes that "it is always a gamble: no one can be sure of the direction from which the next development of art, or the next artist, will arrive. Fortunately for myself, I came from the stalls, the wrong side of the house, and at Covent Garden and Drury Lane found the aesthetic and musical education that had been denied me elsewhere."

That musical education enables him to observe that "not only was Caruso as natural a singer as the thrush he resembled . . . but contradictorily, for all its lack of art, his voice, carrying in its strains, in the sound of those notes which he was able to attain and hold as could no other singer, of that or of a later day, the warm breath of southern evenings in an orange grove, and of roses, caught in the hush of dusk at the water's edge, possessed, as well as a high degree of technique, a certain kind of art."

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Seventy-Nine Professors Protest "Nation" Ban

[*The following letter was sent on February 14 to Dr. Wilbour E. Saunders, chairman of Governor Driscoll's New Jersey Commission on Civil Rights.*]

THE undersigned, professors at Princeton and Rutgers universities, wish to draw to your attention, and to protest against, the resolution of the Newark School Board in indorsement of the action of the Newark superintendent of schools *re The Nation.* You have no doubt read that in what seems to us a highly arbitrary action the superintendent canceled the schools' subscription to *The Nation* and withdrew from the shelves of the library certain issues containing matter that the superintendent and his sponsors did not like. This is by no means an isolated incident but is part of a widespread policy which is in our opinion of the gravest public concern.

We do not wish to argue the merits of the articles in *The Nation,* but prefer to put the issue on the broad ground of freedom of discussion, which, as any informed person knows, is the *sine qua non* of democracy. The issue in essentials is this: Can a school official rightfully inhibit access by the students to any book, periodical, or the like, on the ground that it contains material which, though not in contravention of any law, runs counter to the predilections of the official in question?

If the answer to this question is the "Yes" of the Newark School Board, it seems to us that we, here, are well along the totalitarian road leading to Hitlerian book-burning, the suppression of "dangerous thoughts," and the persecution of citizens whose ideas happen to irk officials of government. The superintendent's successful defense of his action, before the board, rested on the alleged necessity for banning controversial matter in the interest of "democratic" solidarity. But any such solidarity is the goal of the *antithesis* of democracy—the totalitarian state. Such a solidarity is the arch-enemy of all education, for what it requires is not education but indoctrination and cajoled, or enforced, agreement. If any organized, and consequently powerful, minority, or even a majority, can ban the discussion of anything displeasing to *it,* we shall in short order see the end of all true education and with it the demise of democracy.

The great universities of the country do not want students who have been

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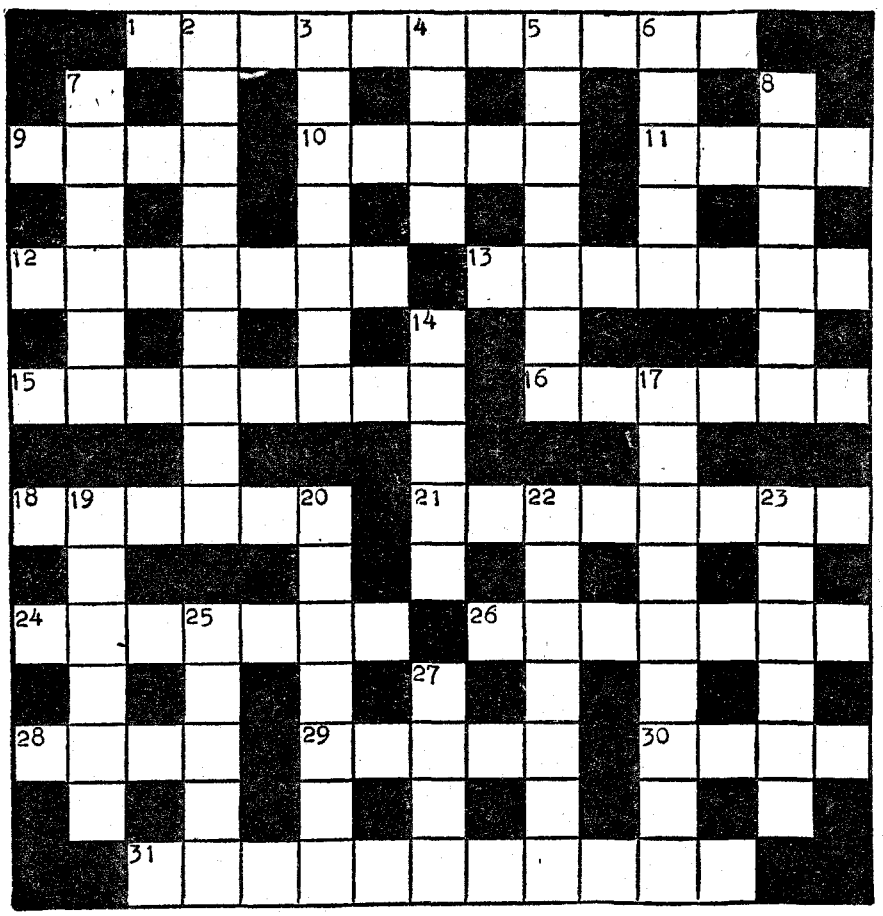
Crossword Puzzle No. 252

By FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Not a double knocker. (11)
9 Forms a line in court. (4)
10 See 21.
11 Goal of many a Nordic lass. (4)
12 Chevalier sings of this place. (7)
13 If these Japanese gentlemen took tea, they'd be fired. (7)
15 Hen? (8)
16 Circus stars and stripes on them. (6)
18 He's far removed again. (6)
21 and 10. Earth? (6, 2, 5)
24 These show all the markings of a Parisian. (7)
26 Sink where the fuel is kept. (7)
28 Pale excuse. (4)
29 I have only an hour ahead of me to find such a heavenly creature. (5)
30 Not too fat to bend over. (4)
31 Greeley? (4, 7)

DOWN

2 Fruit comes from just one tree after another. (9)
3 She referred to the "primrose path of dalliance." (7)
4 "Which, like the _____, . . . wears yet a precious jewel in his head." (4)
5 Two of the four winds blow from here to Mobile? (7)
6 Thing it? (5)
7 First-class circle? (6)
8 A lot of new business goes on it, and changes with age. (6)
14 In summer, both kinds play in the sticks. (5)
17 A table leg gets broken, but it's hardly worth mentioning. (9)
19 This is easy! (6)
20 Object of a peaceful burial by the brave. (7)
22 Caution! Bridge out of here! (7)
23 What can keep the squeaks out? (6)
25 A seer to make things disappear. (5)
27 Alaskan goddess? (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 251

ACROSS:—1 COMPREHENSION; 10 MEDIA; 11 BISECTION; 12 THROTTLED; 13 STINT; 14 FREIGHT TRAIN; 19 SUPERCHARGER; 22 IDEAL; 24 PROJECTOR; 25 TOSCANINI; 26 IDIOT; 27 CROSSEXAMINER.

DOWN:—2 ORDERS; 3 PLASTERER; 4 EMBELLISH; 5 EASED; 6 SACKS; 7 ORIGINAL; 8 SMUTS; 9 INSTANT; 15 HARMONICA; 16 THE MEDICI; 17 ASSISTS; 18 APPEASER; 20 ATTIRE; 21 GRATE; 23 LEADS; 24 PRIDE.

"shielded" from controversy but those whose minds have been sharpened not only by catholic reading but by debate on all the issues that confront them. We are greatly interested that our students should not be mentally dead when they are delivered to us. We have, however, a still deeper concern. This is the preservation of the right of full and free discussion as the very essence of the democracy for which our fathers fought and which we seek to maintain. If the founders of this country had adhered to the principles advocated by the Newark superintendent of schools, and confirmed by the Newark Board of Education, the Declaration of Independence would never have come to light; nor would the Constitution, its First Amendment, and the Bill of Rights now incorporated in it ever have been adopted.

We respectfully await your reply.

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